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ABSTRACT

The purposes of the project reported here were (1) to explore and describe the formal and informal relationships among black and white students in a large, racially mixed, urban high school, and (2) to attempt to explain how those relationships affect student behavior, administrator and teacher behavior, and other facets of the school organization. The study was carried out in a high school which serves students in the lower to middle classes, has been racially mixed for a long time, and has had some past record of racial discord. The methodologies of participant observation and interview were employed over a period of months. The study concluded that informal interracial interactions were virtually nonexistent, that formal interactions occurred only in highly structured situations, that attempts at integration were discouraged by other forces operating within the school, and that attempts to reduce potential race conflict consumed an enormous amount of organizational energy. The concluding model suggests that bi-racialness has two effects. It creates conflicts and simultaneously prevents the creation of a consensual basis to resolve that conflict. Therefore, the organization must structure itself so as to prevent conflict, and this leads it to adopting many characteristics which might be termed "repressive." (Author/JM)

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An Exploratory Study of the Formal and Informal Relationships Between White and Black Students in a Racially Mixed, Urban, Secondary School

by

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ABSTRACT

This project was designed to explore the inter-racial interactions among students in a large, urban, secondary school. The researchers sought and obtained permission to enter such a school, and using the methodologies of participant observation and interview over a period of months, they set out to (1) describe the bi-racial interactions in the school and (2) to develop a model explaining the relationship between those interactions and other facets of the school organization.

The research was guided by four exploratory questions:

(1) Where and to what extent do blacks and whites interact in this school.

(2) Are there two separate student perspectives, one shared by blacks and one shared by white students.

(3) If there are two perspectives, what are the salient characteristics of each.

(4) How does the fact of bi-racialness effect other facets of the school organization.

The study concluded that informal interracial interactions were virtually non-existent, that formal interactions occurred only in highly structured situations, that attempts at integration were discouraged by other forces operating within the school, and that attempts to reduce potential race conflict consumed an enormous amount of organizational energy.

The concluding model suggests that bi-racialness has two effects. It creates conflicts and simultaneously prevents the creation of a consensual basis to resolve that conflict. Therefore, the organization must structure

itself so as to prevent conflict, and this leads it to adopting many characteristics which might be termed "repressive" and in fact, to approach a considerable degree of closedness.

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An Exploratory Study of the Formal and Informal Relationships Between White and Black Students in a Racially Mixed, Urban, Secondary School

Problem and Objectives

Purpose

The purposes of this project were (1) to explore and describe the formal and informal relationships among black and white students in a large, racially mixed, urban high school, and (2) to attempt to explain how those relationships affect student behavior, administrator and teacher behavior, and other facets of the school organization.

For the purpose of this study, the concept of "relationships among black and white students" will also cover their apparent non-relationships. In fact, as the data is presented, it will show more lack of formal and informal relationships between the two groups than anything one might term meaningful interaction.

Background and Specific Questions

The general background of the study is the simple assumption that no non-coercive organization can continue successfully without some underlying sense of cooperation and trust among its members. They have to have some common belief not only that the basic enterprise and the prescribed means of carrying on the routine of organizational life are worthwhile, but that those who take on other roles in the organization share that general set of beliefs and values. Without these basic, common understandings, there may be an almost total lack of cooperation among the participants, and the organizational energy will, of

necessity, be expended in pursuit of cooperation instead of its stated long term goals. On the other hand, in those cases where the sets of understandings are shared, cooperation is thus assured and the organization is free to get on with the business of production. Unfortunately, in many recent instances, it seems that many large, biracial, urban, secondary schools are in the former position. The repeated cases of disruption and violence between black and white students in those schools force one to ask if, and to what degree, any trust and cooperation exists between black and white students, whether blacks and whites share any basic agreement on the purpose and worthwhileness of school, whether they have any common definition of the term "school," and if they share a common perception of the way school life should be carried out. For these reasons, we feel that it is important to study the interaction of black and white students in at least one of these schools.

The terms "formal" and "informal" are used in the title to indicate that all possible interactions will be studied, not only those occuring in the classrooms and instructional areas, but those that take place in the halls, cafeteria, and wherever students gather informally. We have attached a great deal of importance to informal interactions because we find that regardless of the stated causes of racial conflicts, it seems they share an important common element: that is, among students involved, the informal associations and friendship patterns common to adolescents seldom cross racial lines. This phenomenon has been somewhat substantiated by the researchers' personal experience as secondary teachers and administrators in racially mixed schools, and their observations of informal, student activity in the classrooms, corridors, and cafeterias of other similar schools. Black students come to school, go to class, eat, hang around the halls, and talk to other black students, and

white students do those things with other whites. While not intrinsically harmful, this informal, racial division can accentuate any provocation that occurs and can assist in turning an otherwise small incident into a major disruption of the formal organization.

Exploratory Questions

The study, then, will begin by accepting students' "bi-racial interaction" as the unit of analysis. Since the white and black students will have to have numerous formal and informal opportunities for interaction, the basic question of the study will be:

(1) Where and to what extent do blacks and whites interact in this large, biracial, urban high school?

Of course, the converse will also be asked; that is, What is the nature of the non-interaction of black and white students in that school? A complete account of this issue will include an examination of what the students do together in class, in the cafeteria, in the corridors, in the lavatories, and indeed, everywhere students gather. By exploring this question, we will also be studying to what degree the black and white students associate with one another outside of school, and, if those out-of-school associations are based on neighborhood associations, school sponsored activities, or some other type of experience.

In order to describe what black and white students do together, we will also have to examine what they do separately. This may be extremely difficult, but we will have to examine the ways that the white students interact among themselves and the way the black students interact among themselves. In this way we will attempt to develop a better picture of how they deal with and

regard each other and the members of the "other" race. The second question, therefore, is:

(2) Are there two different perspectives, one shared by blacks, another by whites, in the same school?

And, if so,

(3) What are the salient characteristics of the black student perspective as opposed to the white student perspective?

The term "perspective" can be defined as "An ordered view of one's world, what is taken for granted about the attributes of various objects, events and human nature. It is an order of things remembered and expected, as well as actually perceived, an organized conception of what is plausible and what is possible."[1] Perspectives are a combination of beliefs and behaviors. One develops beliefs about how to behave, as he ascertains the degree of success or failure of his acts. As his acts are successful, his beliefs in this or that behavior are strengthened. If he sees his behavior as unsuccessful he alters it in order to obtain a needed reward. The term "perspective" is useful for us because it covers the general way one thinks about and handles himself in a given situation.

Perspectives are shared and group activity takes place as individuals seeking certain rewards ascertain the direction of others' acts and then fit their behavior and beliefs together to engage in common activity and obtain common rewards. What we are looking for, then, is (1) whether the blacks have a common set of beliefs and behavior that they use to deal with certain facts

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1. Tamotsu, Shibutani, "Referenced Groups as Perspectives," in Jerome Manis and Bernard Meltzer, ed., Symbolic Interaction (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), page 161.

of the school organization, and (2) whether the whites have a set different from those held and used by blacks.

Our next question is perhaps the most important. This is an educational study. We are focusing on the interaction of blacks and whites, but our primary goal is to determine the effects of biracial interaction on the school environment. That is, what does biracialness do to the school organization, staff behavior, classroom structure, rules and regulations, their enforcement, and the general way the school is run. We want to know if and how the administrators and teachers accommodate the fact of "biracialness" in the running of the school organization and what limitations that fact puts on the organization and the staff. Hence, our final exploratory question:

(4) How does the fact of "biracialness" and the interaction or non-interaction of black and white students effect various facets of the school organization?

By using these broad questions as guidelines to our research, we hope to conclude with an adequate description and explanation of the dynamics of student biracialness in a large, urban high school.

Selection of a School

At present we do not feel that very much is known about the day-to-day interaction of black and white students. As we have said, from our limited experience we see little interaction between them, and those to whom we talk agree that that is generally the case. But because they are housed in the same building and share the same organizational role, then the way they deal with one another is important to the school's success, and is also a fit topic for serious study. We also feel that we do not have sufficient information about their interaction to warrant the formulation of testable hypotheses.

Therefore, we chose to do the exploratory, one-of-a-kind hypotheses-generating, research study. That is, we selected a school which contained many of the characteristics previously mentioned and, using the data gathering procedures of participation, observation and interview over an extended period of time, we attempted to formulate a longitudinal description of the phenomena of black and white adolescent interaction in the school. Following the description, we will attempt the explanation of the phenomena, its effects on the students, staff and other facets of the school. Hopefully this will contribute to future formulation of testable hypotheses.

Considering the enormous complexity of any biracial, urban secondary school, it is questionable whether it is possible to ever reach a satisfactory degree of "representativeness." However, it is the purpose of this project not to prove or disprove a theory about this type of school; rather, it is our intent to generate theory.

According to Glaser and Strauss:

> Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is <u>controlled</u> by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal. The initial decisions for theoretical collection of data are based only on a general sociological perspective and on a general subject or problem area (such as how confidence men handle perspective marks or how policemen act towards Negroes, or what happens to students in medical school that turns them into doctors). The initial decisions are not based on a preconceived theoretical framework ...

And later,

> The researcher who generates theory need not combine random sampling with theoretical sampling when setting forth relationships among categories and properties. These relationships are suggested as hypotheses pertinent to direction of relationship, not tested as descriptions of both direction and magnitude. Conventional theorizing claims generality of scope, that is, one

> assumes that if the relationship holds for one group under certain conditions, it will probably hold for other groups under the same conditions.[2]

Therefore, the nature of the problem did not require that we prove "randomness of selection," but only that we do our study in a place where the subject phenomena occurs and where the general conditions that surround the phenomena are also present. Of course, throughout the narrative we will constantly attempt to describe the environment and the action in detail. This will add validity to our conclusions because it will enable the reader to compare our subject school with his own situation.

We were granted permission to carry out the study in City* Central High School, which is located in a northern, industrial city of 250,000 inhabitants. Of the school's 1,726 students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve, 26% are black, 71% white, and the remainder are Chicano. While there were a few students from one section of the attendance area who might be termed wealthy, the great majority of the students, both black and white, are in the lower and lower-middle classes. In the recent past, the school, as all the high schools in the city, have had some history of racial discord, but the school year 1970-71 had been relatively quiet with only one major disruption. The school selected, then, is moderately large, serves students in the lower-to-middle classes, is located in an industrial, urban setting, has been racially mixed for a long time, and has had some past record of racial discord.

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2. Bernard Glaser and Anselm Strauss, "Theoretical Sampling," in Norman K. Denzin, ed., Sociological Methods (Aldine Publishing Company, 1970), page 105-106.

*All proper names have been changed to insure the anonymity of the subjects.

Significance

The issue of racial unrest in schools is a most crucial issue in American education and will undoubtedly continue to be so for some time. There is great need for more qualitative research on this matter. Educators need to have some tangible descriptive accounts of the students' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward this phenomenon in order to formulate more hypotheses and to generate other theories and possible solutions to problems. Second or third person accounts describing these situations are not sufficiently valid to prepare individuals to constructively handle such situations. For these reasons, the researcher feels that this project is essential and has great potential for university staffs, professional school administrators, and teachers in the field. At present there seems to be a complete void of any research of what actually occurs in the daily interaction between whites and blacks in a racially mixed, urban high school. By selecting and being accepted in this particular urban high school and by carrying out an in-depth study of the phenomena, the researchers hoped to provide a basic, conceptual framework with which to view the daily interaction of blacks and whites. While we cannot assume that the findings are generalizable to all similar schools, we feel this studied high school is quite representative of such schools across the country, and a detailed description and explanation of the interracial interactions at this school will add a significant contribution to our understanding of the phenomenon of biracialness in many similar schools.

Chapter II

METHODOLOGY

Conceptual Framework

The methodology used in any research must be intrinsically related to the basic assumptions about the phenomena to be studied. Accordingly, an explanation of the methodology used in this work should begin with a brief discussion of the theory of symbolic interaction:

> The term "symbolic interaction" refers, of course, to the particular and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The pecularity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions. Their response is not made directly to the actions of one another, but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions.[1]

An individual, then, is conceived of as an acting unit engaged in the longitudinal process of constructing his action through constant interaction with his environment. As he interacts with others in an environment he gradually learns how to behave in such a way as to obtain some measure of gratification from them. As he further interacts with people and situations, he uses his set of already constructed beliefs and guides his subsequent action accordingly. Of course, that set of beliefs is constantly being redefined according to the individual's experienced success or failure. Thus, the two elements, belief and behavior, are closely intertwined; knowledge follows experience, but experience is shaped by prior knowledge. This set of beliefs and behaviors

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1. Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," Human Behavior and Social Processes, ed. by Arnold Rose (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1962) p. 180.

that one uses to further interpret his action is termed one's "definition of the situation" or "perspective."

Extended to a number of individuals, collective action takes place as individuals, seeking social rewards such as esteem, status and recognition, ascertain the directions of others acts and then fit their lines of action together. A collectivity, then, is an acting unit made up of individuals who are themselves acting units. Just as an individual guides his actions according to his interpretation of his surroundings, so collectivities as acting units guide themselves according to the members' perceived, shared understandings of the environment. Collectivities such as groups, also, engage in the process of constructing their action within their environment.

Or, as Becker, et. al., explained, the members of a collectivity will create a perspective. They will:

> Develop ideas in this interaction that, because they are held in common, create a universe of discourse, a common frame of reference in which communication may take place. Similarly, they develop, as they interact in a variety of institutional settings and specific situations, patterns of individual and collective activity. The activities grow out of the ideas being their logical extensions in actions. They also give weight and meaning to the ideas by creating patterns of everyday experience that make the ideas seem reasonable and appropriate to the situations they are applied to. In this sense, the ideas grow out of the activities.[2]

Analytically, the group perspective may be broken into: (a) a description of the environment within which the group exists, (b) the rewards that the members of the group may strive for in the environment, (c) the proper modes of individual behavior in the group and in the environment, and (d) criteria against which group members and others may be judged.

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2. Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer, and Everett Hughes, Making The Grade, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1968), page 28.

The terms "symbolic interaction" and "perspective" are useful because they serve to underlie our assumption that the students at City Central High School are constantly in the process of constructing systematic and reasonable ways to believe and behave in the school. Our questions asked about the way whites do this in contrast to the way the blacks do this.

However, let us not over simplify. There are three basic problems with our initial questions: "Biracial interaction" was the unit of analysis and we had arbitrarily dichotomized the student population into two segments, black and white. However, the first problem is that we really had no substantial reasons for believing that the whites in that school constituted a "collectivity" in the way they behaved and believed about the school or the blackness of their fellow students. Nor did we know if the blacks shared any common perspective about anything in the school. In fact, we had many reasons to believe that it was not simply blackness versus whiteness. We knew that some of the whites came from a wealthy section while others came from, and are still coming from, impoverished families of immigrants from the rural south. Similarly, many of the blacks came from upper middle and middle class homes where their parents were educated and professionally accomplished, while others came from the stereotyped broken home, lived on or in the streets, and were constantly in trouble with authorities for one thing or another Therefore, while we may have tentatively hypothesized the existence of separate perspectives, black and white, we had no idea whether either the whites or blacks had any legitimate existence as a group. That is, we didn't know if there was any sense of "we-ness" among the members of one race regarding the "they-ness" of the other race.

After all, in many ways the black students behaved and probably believed just as did white students. The great majority of both groups came to school, went to class, did their work, paid attention, complied with rules and regulations, graduated and moved on. Perhaps the dichotomy was legitimate for a beginning, but we had to guard against automatically accepting it as a final product. We had to recognize the existence of at least some form of common student perspective, and only then could we discern the differences between the black and white students.

There is a second and closely related problem. In some prior research on high school students, I concluded that because of the basic organizational structure of a high school, with its teacher and subject specialization, downward communication flow, batch processing of students, and emphasis on maintenance procedure, the organizational structure provided students with an enormous amount of time in which they had literally nothing to do but stay in some state of spectatorship, waiting, watching or listening.[3] And since they were constantly in the company of one another, they used this time to engage in small group relationships. It was these small groups that were the students' important social referrent, not some larger sense of student-ness or allegiance to a particular racial identification. If this is true in City Central, then looking for "blackness" versus "whiteness" may be doomed to failure since both blacks and whites would be subdivided into smaller, isolated units. Therefore, we had to be careful lest we try to force a facade of racial unity on an aggragate which was broken into smaller social units.

And, finally, there is a third problem, that of individual perspective. Blacks and whites are not merely members of a race, they are essentially

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3. Cusick, Philip A., Inside High School: The Students' World. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 1973.

individuals, and, as such, each is charged with the task of working out his own accommodation with his environment. This accommodation may or may not include a sense of identification with other members of his race or any common agreement with members of his race regarding members of another race.

In sum, while we began with a dichotomy between blacks and whites, we had to recognize that (1) there were certainly many beliefs and behaviors shared by both blacks and whites regarding their "student-ness," (2) each racial group might be severely fragmented by geographic, socio-economic and informal interest groups, and therefore, might have no singular consciousness, and (3) each individual student had worked out his own manner of accommodation with the institution which may or may not have included "biracialness."

We had, on the basis of our experience and observations, tentatively assumed that the biracialness of the student body was a fact; that is, that whites shared some perspective of blacks and blacks of whites, and that this dichotomy was potentially an important element in the school. Therefore, we were then in the position of a researcher who formulates a hypothesis and has to take great care to avoid Type I and Type II errors. Taking great pains not to reject the truth, we had to be doubly careful not to retain a falsehood. We felt that we could accomplish this if we were extremely careful with the method.

Some Methodological Considerations

According to Blumer, the procedure suitable for studying a dynamic, social situation is to "approach the study of group activity through the eyes and experience of people who have developed the activity. Hence, it necessarily requires an intimate familiarity with this experience and with the scenes of its operation." He goes on to say: "The study of action would have to be

made from the position of the actor. Such action is forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets and judges; one would have to see the operating situation as the actor sees it. You have to define and interpret the objects as the actor interprets them."[4] Having accepted the perspective and even the social reality, not as a static entity but as a creative process, it is the task of the researcher to actually take part in the process of creation. He simply cannot stand outside and make judgments about it. Again, according to Blumer:

> The objective approach holds the danger of the observer substituting his view of the field of action for the view held by the actor. It is unnecessary to add that the actor acts toward his world on the basis of how he sees it and not on the basis of how that world appears to the outside observer.[5]

The research methodology which enables the researcher to get closest to the social situation from the actor's point of view is participant observation.

> A participant observer in the field is at once reporter, interviewer, and scientist. On the scene he gets the story of an event by questioning participants about what is happening and why. He fills out the story by asking people about their relation to the event, their reactions, opinions, and evaluation of its significance. As an interviewer, he encourages an informant to tell his story, or supply an expert account of an organization or group. As scientist he seeks answers to questions, setting up hypotheses and collecting data with which to test them.[6]

The methodology works at two levels -- (1) Description: the researcher on the scene describes what he reads, sees, and hears and then expands his descriptions from accounts of the situation by his subjects, and (2) Explanation: the researcher attempts to make sense of his subjects' observations

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4. Herbert Blumer, "Sociological Implications of the Thought of G. H. Mead," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 71 (March 1966), p. 542.

5. Blumer, "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," page 542.

6. Blanche Geer, "First Days in the Field," in Phillip E. Hammond, ed., Sociologist at Work (New York, Doubleday, 1964), page 383.

and by further questioning of informants, obtains the explanation of the situation from the actors. Participant observation, then, (1) describes a social situation through the senses of the researcher and his subjects, and (2) explains the situation from the point of view of both the researcher and his subjects. Since the researcher is in part a principal, in him these two levels are combined.

As a researcher immerses himself in the situation, he simultaneously formulates tentative or working hypotheses, and as he continues his field work so he attempts to gather data which will either substantiate or contradict those hypotheses.

It may be unnecessary to mention the fact that participant observation is not meant to determine the final answer to any social phenomenon, rather it is purely exploratory and is to be used in cases where little work has been done. The final product of the study is the tentative explanation of social behavior which may be used to generate hypotheses for further testing. Like all research, the end of the participant observer's work is the beginning of someone else's.

There are two standard objections to participant observation. One is: since they deal with a limited and perhaps unique sample, the conclusions may be ungeneralizable. The reply is that while an instance of social phenomena may be unique, that need not prevent one from learning about and from it by intelligent study. After all, one should not have to duplicate or recreate the Battle of Saratoga to understand the lessons therein. While a situation may be unique, human reaction to it may be quite common. A basic humanness transcends social settings and enables one living in New Jersey to understand and appreciate both Greek drama and Etruscan art. The uniqueness, therefore,

lies in the social setting and not in the human reaction, and a good description of a social phenomenon, however unique, may be quite intelligible to one who never participated.

A second, oft-repeated objection has to do with the absence of standardized tests of validity and reliability. This involves some explanation. Some researchers assume that social reality is objective and can be perceived by someone living close to and observing it. Others adhere to symbolic interaction and assume that participants actually create their own social reality, and, in order to understand it, should actually take part in that creation. I believe more strongly in the latter, but either way the strength of the methodology comes out. As one lives close to a situation, his description and explanation of it have a first person quality which other methodologies lack. As he continues to live close to and moves deeper into that situation his perceptions have a validity that is simply unapproachable by any so-called standardized method. Likewise, as his validity becomes better, so his reliability, which is an extension of his validity, becomes better. As the researcher is the actual instrument, as he becomes more aware, more valid, so he must of necessity become more reliable.

A distinct advantage of the methodology in this study was that it allowed us to stay conceptually open until we were very familiar with the students. For instance, we tentatively hypothesized the existence of a "black student perspective," but there was nothing to prevent us from discarding that hypothesis and starting somewhere else if, after entering the school we found that it made no sense. Also, our initial question was: "What is the nature of black-white student interaction," but after entering the school we found that the issue was not to study their interaction, but their patterns of non-interaction. The methodology proved ideal for this type of problem.

To produce a worthwhile study we endeavored to tailor our work to the six indices of subjective adequacy stated by Homans. (1) Time: the more time an individual spends with a group the more likely it is that he will obtain an accurate perception of the social meaning its members live by; (2) Place: the closer the researcher works geographically to the people he studies, the more accurate should be his interpretations; (3) Social circumstances: the number and variety of social circumstances which the observer encounters within the social structure of the community increase his accuracy; (4) Language: the researcher and his subjects should share a common language; (5) Intimacy: the greater degree of intimacy the researcher achieves, the greater his accuracy; (6) Consensus: confirmation that the meanings interpreted by the observer are correct. With these six indices in mind, the researcher who undertakes a participant observation study would have some assurance that his findings reach an acceptable degree of validity.[7]

> The real proof of this study is in the presentation of the data.
>
> This rule, as obvious and important as it is, is seldom observed in sociology. Precisely because it treats everyday things, such as the family, property, crime, etc., the sociologist most often thinks it unnecessary to define them rigorously at the outset. We are so accustomed to use these terms, and they recur so constantly in our conversation, that it seems unnecessary to render their meaning precise. We simply refer to the common notion, but this common notion is very often ambiguous. As a result of this ambiguity, things that are very different in reality are given the same name and the same explanation and this leads to boundless confusion.[8]

Because the things we deal with are common, one reporting such a study must present his findings in extensive narrative form. It is our job to render the

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7. See Severyn T. Bruyn, The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 181.

8. Durkheim, Emile, The Rules of Sociological Method (The Free Press), 1968, page 37.

descriptions in as complete and realistic a manner as possible. In fact, this is a major test of validity. If, as others who are engaged in similar situations upon reading the data agree that "that is the way it is," so our findings will demonstrate a higher degree of validity.

Entering the School

Participant observers frequently have difficulty entering into situations, especially those regarded as "sensitive," and therefore, I would like to briefly recount our entry into the district and the school. In the spring of 1971, we began to contact a number of large school districts in an attempt to find a suitable school. We knew we would have easy access to some schools for various reasons, i.e., in one city the superintendent was a personal friend, but, of course, we would have preferred to go to Lansing, Michigan, which we knew quite well and, being close, would eliminate long drives. Therefore, we contacted a principal of a suitable high school and were told, "It would be a good idea," but we had to get the permission of the research section of the central office, then of the assistant superintendent. Unfortunately, it didn't work. The authorities in the central office frankly admitted that they were afraid our presence would further deteriorate what they considered to be an already unhappy situation in that and in every other one of their large, biracial schools.

There were a number of nearby cities in Michigan with suitable schools. Fortunately, it isn't just a myth, not in Michigan anyway, that school administrators are ex-coaches. Hence we had our ready-made influence. Mr. Ayling was the former football and golf coach in Pontiac Central High School, which has been and is still a sports power in the cities of Michigan, i.e., Flint,

Detroit, Saginaw, Pontiac, Grand Rapids, and Lansing. Because of his combination of athletic and coaching talent, as well as his personal popularity, he was well known in those cities by the school administrators, many of whom were also ex-coaches.

Mr. Ayling's friends included two principals in one city, both of whom ran schools which would have been acceptable. We decided on Central. I think it was a good choice. City has been integrated for many years, and we liked the way the principal handled his school. He is generally considered a very strong individual who has good control and hence fewer problems than other local high schools. For example, his was the only biracial school in the area that was not disrupted by racial trouble in the school year of 1971-72. That suited our purposes. We really didn't want sensationalism; we wanted to know about the day-to-day interactions of the students. Most students do not spend that much time in riotous disruption, and what time is spent that way can be better documented by newspapers and police reports. We wanted to know about the more normal situations in classrooms, cafeterias and corridors. Also, we felt that if we were to enter a potentially disruptive situation we might be singled out as contributors to this or that particular incident and subsequently asked to leave.

The principal was very supportive of the idea. He displayed no nervousness about our intent, and, of course, we went out of our way to emphasize that we would not be there to criticize him or his staff. He liked that, assured us that he understood that we were realiable, and not like "that bunch from the Social Science Research Center at the University of Michigan -- those guys came in here and wanted to do a study, said it would help me find out 'What was wrong with my school.'"

We then said that we would go to the central office and the assistant superintendent for formal permission and he said he would call the central office and assure them that the study had his support. Two weeks later we went to see the district's director of research and were not surprised to find him quite skeptical. He wanted to know what the "independent variables" were and didn't seem to understand that in exploratory field research one tried to avoid positing independent variables. He really raised his eyebrows when we told him that all we wanted to do was to go interact with students and see what they thought about and how they reacted to the issue of biracialness. "You mean you want to hang around with the kids?" he asked incredulously..... He was really quite considerate and only wanted the support of the superintendent before he could safely approve it.

In the meantime, our informal influence was at work. Passing by the glass cubicle where the research director had his office was another administrator who at one time or another had coached golf in Mr. Ayling's league, and out they went, talking about this or that, and how so and so back in 1965 or so had done such and such a thing, then had to go upstairs to see another ex-coach and continue their reminiscing. While they were doing that Mr. Ayling explained what we wanted and they, with the easy familiarity of old friends, assured him that "It would be taken care of."

Two weeks later we went to the assistant superintendent for final permission and he told us that just before we went into his office he had had two phone calls from his own staff members assuring him that we were reliable and would do the school no harm. He added that he genuinely liked the idea and asked that we be sure to make the results known to the staff. We assured him that we would and left, planning to begin in December.

The field work started December 6, 1971, with the principal introducing us to the teaching staff at a 7:45 a.m. faculty meeting. We were first on the agenda and in about two minutes had explained what we would like to do. After a short explanation, only one teacher raised a question: "Couldn't the students do that?" Our reaction was, "Yes, they probably could, but they don't and we're not sure they're sophisticated enough." There being no more questions, we rightly assumed that we had staff approval and left.

The principal said that he would line up a few students the following morning and we could meet with them in his office to explain the study and make some initial contacts. When we got up to the office there were eight, pleasant looking students sitting around in a circle. Four males and four females, four black and four white. We introduced ourselves and explained what we wanted. I then asked if there were any questions. Kathy, the senior class secretary, said, "For what?" "A good question," I said. "Because I don't think enough people know about what school is like from the students' point of view." That seemed to satisfy everyone and the group relaxed a little. We asked them what they felt might be the best method to get the study underway. Pam, a black cheerleader, said, "Why don't we write our schedules on a piece of paper for you and then you will know where we are and can go to classes with us." I felt that was a good suggestion and I was hoping for something similar to that, so that is how we began. We took their individual schedules and the following morning went to classes with them until we felt sufficiently free to go where we wished without attaching ourselves to any particular student. Thereafter we continued in the school for two or three days a week until mid-April, and even after that we made periodic visits into June and even into the following fall. And, throughout that period we tried to maintain close contact

with as many students as possible and observe and record as much student action as we could.

Under the heading of participant observation are a number of variations, best stated by Lutz and Iannaccone who explained that "a researcher who undertakes a participant observation study may assume one of three roles:

1. "The participant as an observer": In this case the researcher already has his group membership before he undertakes a study and therefore his role as observer or researcher would be unknown to his subjects.

2. "The observer as a limited participant": The observer would join a group for the expressed purpose of studying it. The members would, perhaps more than likely, know of the researcher's intent in joining the group.

3. "The observer as a non-participant": That is, without group membership. Here the presence of the observer may not even be known to the group and if it were known, he would still be outside the group.[9]

In this project, which we continued into June of 1972, our roles were a combination of (2) and (3). We were clearly outsiders in the beginning, but eventually, as we came to know a number of students quite well, our status difference dropped, and they accepted us easily and would carry on whatever they were doing if we joined them.

Basically, the activities consisted of:

1. Attending as many classes as possible. That is, together, we were in every teacher's class at least once, and we made attendance at some classes (i.e., black studies) almost every day.

2. We went where students were -- to the cafeteria, to the meetings, ball games, to the gym, and to whatever assemblies there were.

3. We collected as much written information as we could, teacher schedules, school newspapers, yearbooks, staff memorandums, student handbooks, maps

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9. See Frank W. Lutz and Lawrence Iannaccone, Understanding Educational Organizations: A Field Study Approach (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1969), p. 108.

of the district, whatever we could to give us more background.

4. Informal interviewing: As we began to meet students, we would make a point of sitting with them in the cafeteria, chatting with them in the halls and being peripherally involved in whatever happened to be going on.

5. Formal interviewing: Toward the end of the study we formally interviewed a number of teachers, many students, all the vice principals, the principal, two of three security guards, and some guidance counselors. The purpose of the interviews was to try out the insights we had gained from listening to and observing students.

Particular Methodological Problems

There are a number of specific methodological problems which I would like to explain, but just because I detail the problems does not mean that I would not recommend the methodology be used again in this type of setting.

First of all, we were two aged 30+ outsiders and our subjects included 1,726 adolescents. It was, of course, up to us to get to know a number of them, some of them quite well, observe and record their behavior and statements of beliefs about whole ranges of topics, and then analyze the total to see what sense we could make of it. And, the first problem is simply that we were so limited. We probably never knew more than 100-150 students by name, and even among them, only 50-75 knew us by name. We could have known many more and better if the school had been smaller, but there were simply so many classes and activities we wanted to see that we kept moving around quite often. Personally, this didn't bother me. In the work referred to earlier I had done a study of three groups, and made myself a member of one of them for six months. I wasn't trying to duplicate that study of small group behavior in school. After

all, the topic here was not specific behavior of a few students, but a general phenomena among a wide variety of students. Also, I wanted to see if we could cover a larger population using the same general technique.

The second problem was just what we came to study --- the biracialness of the students. That is, as the next chapter will show, the school really was divided into two parts, white and black, and there was practically no communication or interaction between them. In fact, they rarely spoke about the fact that they rarely spoke, and showed an amazing lack of concern for each other's presence. Therefore, we had to study a dual phenomena which, at times, made up spread our efforts quite thin.

A third and very obvious problem was our color: we are both white. Now, this was thought by some of the original readers of the proposal to be a major concern, but personally, I would list it as a minor one. True, we were worried about it, and equally true we tried unsuccessfully to include a black professor or student from Michigan State University in the study.

But, personally, I wasn't that worried about it. I faced a similar question before when, as a 31 year old student at Syracuse University, I wanted to study high school students and that was at the height of the rhetoric about the split between those over and those under thirty. And yet I found that the age barriers were easily overcome if I could simply learn to sit back, accept the behavior of my subjects as reasonable and orderly, and be sure not to threaten anyone. I didn't, after all, have to become one of them. I had only to get my presence accepted so that I could observe them and interact with them on a limited basis while they were doing what they ordinarily do. This proved to be no more difficult for blacks than whites. The cafeteria conversation at the black tables did not change whether we came or left; when in the black studies

class one of us was present, this did not prevent one or another student from saying that he hated and would like to kill whites. In fact, even those who said it did not look at us, or act hostile in any way; they seemed to direct their hostility at an abstracted whiteness, not at any particular white who happened to be present. I'm not saying that they didn't see our color, I'm saying that our color alone was not enough of a factor to change their behavior in any way. Nor did it cause them to exclude us from what we wanted to see. On a number of occasions one or the other of us was the only white in an otherwise all black situation, i.e., the cafeteria setting, the meetings to plan a black student union, the Harlem Renaissance class, the human relations day discussions. And it just doesn't make any sense to state that our presence made a difference. We are not that insensitive, nor were our black students that reticent. For instance, when I asked Mr. B. if I could sit in with the blacks trying to form a union, he said, "Well, you'll have to ask the kids... And they won't bite their tongues. If they don't want you, they'll tell you." And they would have ... but they didn't. But, by that time I had gained some acceptance. Once previously in there the blacks were having a discussion and Herbie was asking why blacks vote for white politicians, who then give them very little. On the way out I told Herbie I agreed, and in a continued discussion, Herbie made a big point of having "the man -- himself -- agree." Later Herbie and I were talking about whites in class, and I asked Herbie about other whites taking Mr. B.'s class, and he said what he did about them getting killed. I asked him, "What about me -- do they mind me?" He said, "No, they don't mind you. Remember that day you spoke up and supported us on the ---- what you said in class. Well, people knew you were straight and that you were supporting them right there. They don't mind you."

But then we rarely said anything, and when we did, did so only in a supportive manner, we didn't ask personal questions except on rare occasions, we never bothered anyone, we just watched and listened, and I've consistently found in doing this type of study that if you just listen and seem interested, people will tell you anything, literally anything. Therefore, although I would have liked to have included a black researcher, I do not think the absence of one made a significant difference to the study. And, as for those few extremely militant students, we consistently found that those who expressed the most hatred of whites, when asked for a few minutes to answer our questions, were extremely courteous and helpful, and not in a condescending, "Put On" way. Their answers were honest, consistent, and insightful. Of course, we never forced close friendships with either blacks or whites. One reason was that we had a lot to see and didn't spend an inordinate amount of time with a few students. And, our color was a decided barrier to closeness. As one black girl told Dick: "I have to be careful how much I talk to you... I need friends, too."

True, we had to overcome suspicion, but not suspicion of color. When we came into school one morning during the first week, one black boy said to another, "Them's the po-lice, man, I can spot the po-lice." But that didn't last or cause us any trouble. We didn't act like policemen -- didn't spend much time with administrators. Also, people just don't change their behavior, not unless one intrudes, and we didn't. At the end I was interviewing people on the steps outside and there were some boys who regularly sat there and smoked grass. They seldom even looked at me and once one even indicated to me that I would be welcome to join if I wished. In general, we were simply accepted as people who were from Michigan State and who were doing some sort of

study. Some of the more articulate students immediately guessed that the biracialness was our subject, and, of course, we didn't deny it; others just paid no attention to us. One clear indication of our success was the fact that, as the principal put it, "You're not bothering anybody. If you were, I'd have had a grievance by now."

At the end of each day's work, Mr. Ayling and I would come back and generally discuss what we had seen that day and mention possible ways to further explore this or that interesting aspect. When we arrived back on campus we would tape or type our notes. All these notes were compiled into 500 plus pages, in addition to all the records, papers, etc., collected during the time. The notes, as Becker suggests, were classified and coded according to the event, participants, physical setting, time of occurance, and reaction of the participants.[10] The events and statements of belief which occurred with greatest frequency in the first months of the study were combined into tentative perspectives concerning particular situations. Subsequently, each tentative perspective was checked by directly asking the group members or others about its applicability to a particular situation. The perspectives that were verified by the subjects were considered to be a part of the total group perspective. As the individual group perspectives were identified and described, they were placed into a larger framework explaining biracialness in the school.

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10. Becker, Making the Grade, page 67.

Chapter III

Black-White Interactions

Introduction

The intent of the study is to examine formal and informal black-white student interactions in an urban high school. To do this, the entire chapter will be devoted to describing the school, from the formal organization and staffing policies to the relationships between teachers and students, and the student activity in the cafeteria, corridors, classrooms and lavatories. It is my intent to provide a reader with a fairly complete understanding of everything that went on in the building. I am taking a symbolic interactionist view of social reality, which assumes that whatever interaction or non-interaction occurs does so in relation to a particular environment, and therefore, when describing the interaction, we must do so in terms of that environment. It makes no sense to state a fact or describe a particular case of interaction unless we first explain the physical and social environment and the events that went on beforehand, the action itself, and an assessment of the actions' effect on other factors in the environment. Placing the action "in situ," is our method of making it intelligible.

The Community

Central High School is placed on the amorphous fringe of a metropolitan area where residential, commercial, and industrial interests come together. The school serves a lower Michigan factory town, one of a series of cities along that megolopolyptic belt which covers most of the Atlantic seaboard, then passes

out through New York, into and across north central Ohio, around the great lakes to Chicago and Milwaukee, finally fading out in the Dakota prairies. Of the central city's 193,317 people, 28.6% are black, and 2,000 are classified as "other." The metropolitan area, which includes the town and its suburbs, contains 330,128 people, 59,622 of whom are black. A little playing with percentages shows that almost all the black people in the SMSA are living inside the central city.[1]

The economic life of the area is dependent on three giant factories, all part of General Motors. Of the area's labor force of 185,000, over 90% are wage and salary workers and 33% of those work in those factories or their subsidiaries. The area has been generally prosperous and has attracted a large number of immigrating southerners, both black and white. However, in recent years, when the factories are on strike or cutting back, it is these people who are the most vulnerable. Many are financially marginal and a large number are probably impoverished.

City High, one of four senior secondary schools in the city, serves the southeastern section of the city. It covers an area that has many of the, frankly, less desirable urban characteristics, as well as the most wealthy residential sector. The area is bounded on the south by the east-west superhighway; on the east, the north-south superhighway is under construction; and beyond that is the downtown area, most of which is included in the school's attendance area. In the northwestern section of the school's attendance area is the river, which, while it is sometimes referred to as the boundary between black and white residential areas, is actually only one of the many boundaries

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1. These figures were obtained from the 1970 census.

separating black enclaves from white enclaves. Also in that corner is one of the three factories, behind which is a residential district composed of severely deteriorated houses. Of any four houses, one is a saloon, one is boarded up, one is falling down, and only one is barely inhabitable. This is the worst part of the city's large, black district which stretches out over the north side.

The school's attendance area has 1,726 students, grades 10-12, 26% of whom are black. When we contracted to do the study in the spring of 1971, the projected black population for fall, 1971, was to be as much as 35%, but many black families had to move from the southside because of the highway construction.

In the northern part of the attendance area there is a large area of long, straight streets, on which are the one and two family homes of salaried workers. Some of the sections are quite poor, with a sprinkling of converted churches and falling down or boarded up houses; but other sections are quite well tended. Unlike the factory area where most of the residents are blacks, this area is mostly white, with a few blacks or Chicanos. This sometimes is referred to as "Little Arkansas" because so many of the residents are from the south.

To the northeast, the area which is further from the central city, the houses improve and many are quite attractive. Directly to the east and the southeast is an area of middle-to-upper-middle class homes. The few staff members who live in the school's attendance area live here. Beyond that section is another industrial park, and beyond is an apartment complex inhabited almost entirely by blacks.

While one tours the area, there is little to give him a feeling that he is in a community. Some of the area's residents are obviously quite wealthy, some are middle income, and a great many are poor, even quite poor. But, since the

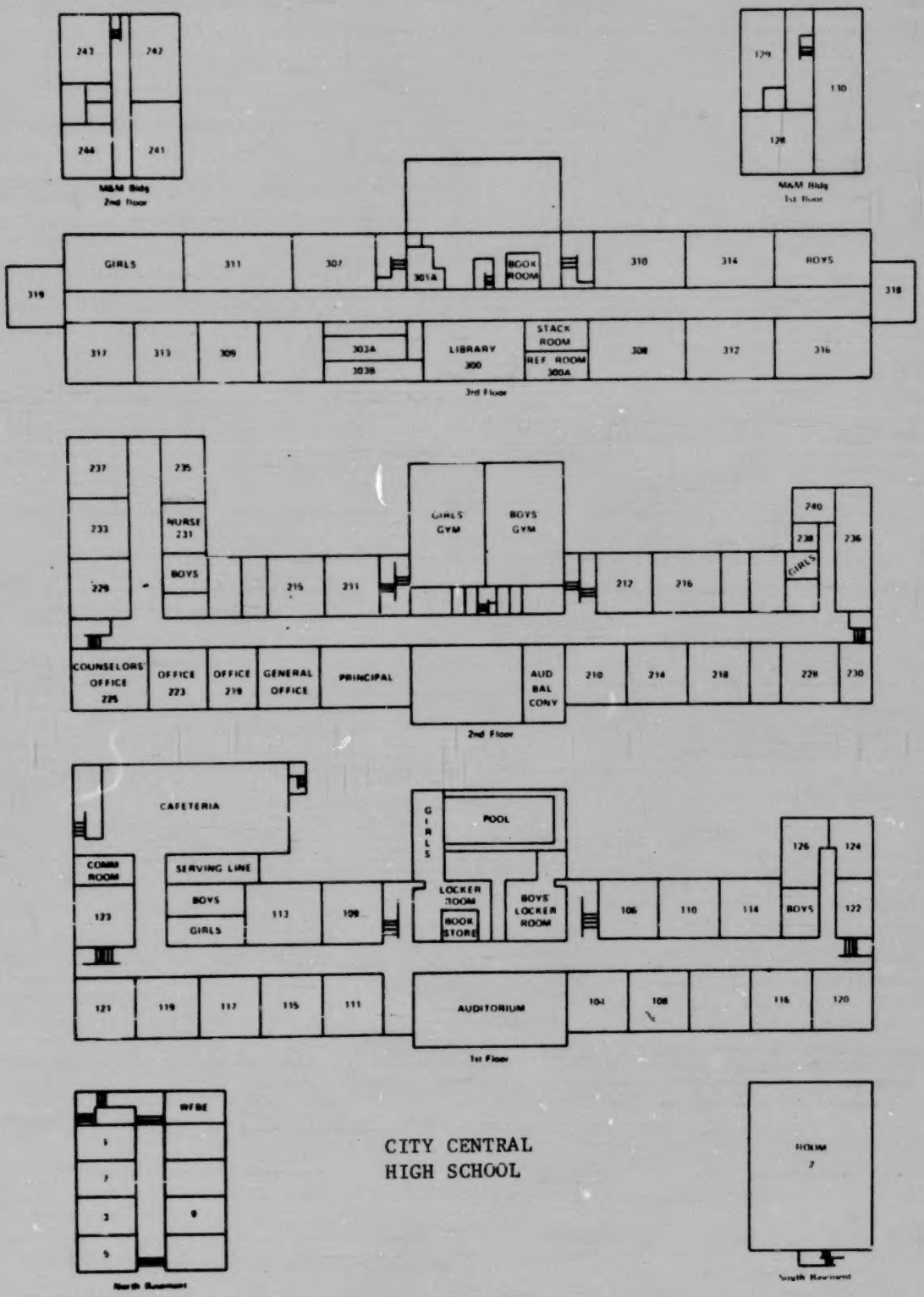
area is so fragmented, with highways, industrial parks, civic, commercial, industrial, and even educational complexes, there is no sense of "wholeness." The various residential pockets are divided by major thoroughfares, super highways, a river, and others by a number of open spaces, such as playgrounds, parks, and cemetaries. And, of course, there are many non-residential areas, business districts, factories, and numerous warehouses. In sum, there is nothing in the school's attendance area that would encourage one to refer to it as a community.

The Physical Setting

The school itself, with its playgrounds, parking lots and lawns, is set at the corner of two streets, one of which is a major, east-west byway, the other somewhat quieter and lined with fairly well-kept, older homes. Immediately adjacent to the school is a junior high school and a community college which is growing rapidly and covers an area of about twice that of Central High. In all, it is a large campus, with junior high, high school, and college, with most of the land that is not directly given to buildings being devoted to parking lots and playing fields.

City Central has two buildings. The main one, built of red brick in 1923, is a massive, neo-gothic structure with a long, flat, windowed facade, and turreted and spired at either end. It is well maintained on the outside and the new frames and windows presently being installed are giving it a freshened appearance.

The second and newer, smaller building is referred to as the M & M, music and mechanical arts building. Auto, woodworking, and metal shops are on the ground floor, music, drafting and one odd classroom on the main floor.



CITY CENTRAL
HIGH SCHOOL

As the map indicates, the interior of the main building has three floors, each consisting of one main corridor with an "ell" at either end. From the corridor, one has direct access to the classrooms, offices, and special areas. The tile paved corridors are lined with lockers, but are otherwise clear and unobstructed. The doors to the classrooms and offices are generally closed.

The classrooms are of a type found in most American secondary schools. The rooms are square, with one wall devoted to windows facing out either on the front lawn on the east or the parking lot on the west. The other three walls are half painted, half covered up with blackboards or bulletin boards. All are literally full of chairs, with up to thirty to forty in every classroom, far more than is needed because of an enrollment drop of 300 or 400 students due to the highway construction which forced southside families to move. The chairs are all in rows facing the front where the teacher's desk faces the class. The individual teacher's subject speciality is obvious in any room. Social studies and history teachers hang newspapers and posters of famous Americans; English teachers have pictures of authors and boards with sentences and spelling words on them; the Black Studies teacher has posters of Rap Brown, Huey Long and Angela Davis; typewritters in the typing room; computer terminals and board equations in the math room; and charts of quantative material or posters showing significant scientific events in the science rooms. The labs are full of long, apparatus-laden tables, surrounded by work benches where the students may do their experiments together.

While the buildings are fairly well maintained, there is some general air of run-downness in many of the classrooms. Some are quite messy, with old books, unmarked papers, and severely marked desks. As much as anything, though, this reflects the individual teachers' preference. Others are clean and neat.

In addition to the classrooms there are large, special areas. The cafeteria is new, or at least renovated. The auditorium is always clean and neat, swept carpets, new curtains and padded seats. The gym, which is on the second floor, is always clean and the floors and equipment there are well polished, but the locker rooms are generally stale and foul smelling. Most of the lockers have been quite dented and banged, and many of the toilets and urinals are broken. The lavatories throughout the building, although strictly supervised by the "John Attendants," are generally in poor condition, with no towells, soap or toilet paper, half of the facilities stopped up, and a variety of epithets scrawled on the walls: "Northern is here to kill," "Get Whitey," "Little John."

The School Organization

City High is a very complex place and while this study was primarily designed to discover what black and white students do together, some attention must first be given to the formal organization. The school is an integral part of the city school district, and, as such, many of the important organizational decisions are made outside the building. The district is administered by a superintendent and a number of assistant administrators. In the central office are three associate superintendents, one for K012, one for finance, and a third for the private Foundation which gives substantial financial assistance to the school district. One step down the administrative line are the administrative assistants and directors who direct the state and federal relations program, the secondary and elementary education programs, instructional services, business affairs, research and testing services, and public information. Of course, many of the administrators have one or two assistants, in addition to their secretaries.

The organization of the school is of a standard type for schools of that size, and has what is sometimes referred to as the "Platoon System." At the head of City High is the principal, who is generally entrusted with everything that goes on in the building. He is assisted by five other full-time administrators: one deputy principal, an assistant principal for counseling, another for curriculum and instruction, a third for students, and an administrative assistant for discipline. Beneath them in the organizational hierarchy are 95 teachers, divided according to their particular speciality into departments. All, of course, are presumed subject matter experts in some area, i.e., English, history, music, drama, math, coaching, etc., and the school is organized so that these teachers may pass on that speciality to groups of students during the six fixed, 57-minute periods each day. In addition to the teachers are the counselors, nurses, secretaries, cafeteria personnel and custodians. And, of course, there are four hall monitors, or "John Attendants," as the students call them. They are generally expected to maintain order in the halls and lavatories.

Basic Operating Philosophy

As I describe the activity in Central High, the reader will become acquainted with the day-to-day running of the school, but first I would like to describe the basic operating philosophy of the school.

City High is what one would generally term a traditional-authority centered, vertically organized institution. Decisions are made at the top and handed down, down from the board and superintendent to the principal, down to the assistants, down to the teachers, and ultimately down to the students. The organizational emphasis is on promptness, at least utilitarian compliance, order and predictabilility. Classes are scheduled at pre-arranged times for set lists of students.

These students are expected to be there on time, and when they enter they are expected to sit in their pre-assigned seats and wait to be told what to do by the teacher. As they do those things under teacher direction, that is, as they write what they are told to write, read as they are told to read, hand in what they are told to hand in, it is assumed that they will learn. If a class lasts for a year and the student completes it successfully, he will earn ten credits; for half year classes, a student earns five credits. After three years and the accumulation of 175 credits, the individual graduates with his diploma.

The organization spends a great deal of time and effort trying to discourage spontaniety, enthusiasm and spur-of-the-momentness. They don't fit in with the organization's pre-arranged structure, and they are never seriously discussed as alternatives to the present system. According to administrators and teachers, and even many students, the things that go wrong in the school do so, not because there is an over-emphasis on bureaucratic procedures, but because the bureaucratic procedures have not been adequately adhered to by the personnel.

Administrators and Discipline

In keeping with this philosophy, the main efforts of all the administrators are directed toward discipline.

The assistant superintendent said, "I'll tell you this, it is by far the most tightly run ship in the district." Of the principal, a student mentioned, "He says in sophomore orientation, 'We run the school -- do as we say and you won't get in trouble.'" When the principal himself spoke of his attitude he said, "The only alternative I see when a demonstration starts is to call the police." In relation to curriculum materials he said, "If there is something on the questionable list, I have learned it's best to say no. In fact, if there is a question about anything, I find it best to say no."

Saying "no" was the principal's way of dealing with a highly complex and structured situation in which an enormous amount of things could "go wrong." As administrative assistant in charge of discipline, Mr. D. dealt with many of them. For instance, he sat down one day and said:

> What a day. We started off with twenty dogs in the building this morning. We chased them all over the building. By the time we got them out and I got back to my office, there were twenty-five kids waiting. Half way through them, the junior high school called. They had food poisoning in the building and dismissed 600 kids and 300 of them came over here. I'm running around trying to get them out and my wife calls -- the car is stuck some place. How long can this last? I wonder what it would be like not to have all this crap everyday.

This is not atypical. Seldom do things go smoothly. "Another one of those days, " Mr. D. would say, whenever we would meet.

Most of Mr. D.'s time is spent chasing students around the building or talking to students in his office who are there upon referral of a teacher or the attendance office. These usually lead to suspensions. He is the last person in the school the students see prior to being suspended, so he is often regarded as an adversary by students.

He had mixed feelings about this. Looking out across the parking lot at three police cars, he saw a group of students running by and said,

> What's the use of chasing them? I chased them down from the third floor one day, twelve of them, and that pusher was one of them. And I had caught him before, and followed all of the procedures do he had his warning. The police were at the bottom of the stairs and they didn't stop one of them. Shit, if they don't do anything, what can we do?

But he seriously believed in his role as an enforcer:

> You know what our biggest problem is here? It's not fights or knifings, it's attendance. We can't get the kids to school and if we do, we then have to get them to class ... You really have to believe that what you're doing is right. I couldn't do it otherwise, like ... you know, what's the worse thing kids can do -- not knifing, not talking back to teachers, but skipping ... because one thing we can't do is let kids come to class, walk in, look around and decide, 'Well, I don't want to be here, I think I'll go home ...'

> Some day these kids will be in places where they have to show up and we have to teach them that.

More particularly, he regarded non-attendance as the beginning of larger problems. Speaking of one particular boy:

> We missed the boat with him ... he's a nice kid ... personable, but we should have got to him when he started skipping gym, then we wouldn't be having the problems we're having with him now. We let him go and now he doesn't do anything ... not anything so bad that you can throw him out. Well, I came close to calling the police on him one day ... But we should have kept after him. It wouldn't have been easy, but little by little he would have come around and now in his senior year he could be getting himself straight.

Getting the students to come to school was a problem. The absentee rate seemed to be about 15% or higher, and Central, like many similar schools, had quite a high dropout rate. In the first six months of the year, 173 students had left.

The school's suspension policy accounted in part for a number of absences and probably for a number of dropouts as well. During this period from October to February, 1972, of approximately seventy-five school days, 410 students were suspended for periods of up to ten days.

Below is a brief compilation of suspensions during that four month period.

1.	Smoking	144
2.	Off Campus	130
3.	Fighting	42
4.	Insubordination	37
5.	Truancy	30
6.	Theft	9
7.	Class Disruption	7
8.	Alcohol	3
9.	Profanity	2

10.	Endangering Others	2
11.	Weapon	2
12.	Intimidating Acts	1
13.	Threatening a Teacher	1

"Off campus" means that a student was outside the immediate school boundaries, which is the sidewalk that encircles the school. The parking lots on the two sides of the building are "off campus" and this is where many of the students were caught smoking and subsequently suspended. The suspensions ranged from three days to ten days, with a few lasting up to the end of the semester. The days allotted to each suspension were in relation to the severity of the incident, also taking into consideration the number of previous offenses committed by the individual. If a student was caught smoking, the first suspension would be for three days, and the second suspension would be for five days.

Of the 410 suspensions, the first four months, 127 were female, approximately thirty percent, and 126 were black students, also about thirty percent. It is important to note that during the year following the study, 1972-73, the policy of suspending students for smoking and being off campus was dropped, and a detention policy was implemented. This decreased the number of suspensions to a fraction of what it had been before. Of course, those students who, after being placed on detention, failed to come in after school were then suspended. The administrators were quite happy with the policy.

Most of the teachers appreciate the administrators efforts and regard them as supporting, but there are some who would like more tolerance. According to Mr. G.,

> I call D. "quick draw." He kicks them out fast. He kicked one kid out before he even enrolled. He was a transfer from Eastern, and when he got out of his car with a cigarette in his mouth, D. suspended him.

He went on, speaking of staff planning day:

> The two issues that were talked about all day were attendance and the need for teachers to get together. It wasn't a question of what they could do to their classes to encourage kids to come. It was, instead, how many days should we give them before we kick them out. Those assholes wanted to kick kids out if they missed ten days.

The security guards expressed some of this same feeling. When they spoke of maintaining order, they frequently took the student's side. According to Mrs. C., "I told a boy to go home one day when he was high, so that he wouldn't get in trouble and he went out and stole a car. I still feel bad about that, so I got about three teachers now who I can go to and they will take a student for me. I told D. we needed a rap room and he just laughed at me." Mrs. C. feels she is more capable of understanding students than most of the administrators and teachers; therefore, she usually handles all but the serious problems herself.

> They just don't understand these kids. I know how to talk to them. They (the administrators) start yelling and grabbin' their arms, you just can't do that. They think because a kid's got long hair he's bad. I just accept them for what they are, whether they got hair down to here or they're bald. That's why the program didn't work at Eastern -- the security people thought they were cops. I talk to them.

On the other hand, the administrators generally agreed that the security guards were very successful. "I don't know how we ever got along without them," said Mr. D.

The Students

If one were standing at the west corner of the first floor when the bell ended one period in preparation for the next, he would see the previously empty halls immediately fill with students, all 1,726 of them seeming to be going indifferent directions. Most are traveling to their next class alone, but

others are with a friend or two and talk animatedly as they move along. There is, of course, time for various groups to gather in one place or another, as a group of boys did each day next to Mrs. C. for a few minutes of enthusiastic exchange before the next class. It is entirely obvious that there is a racial split: the "freaks" who gather by the entrance to the gym are all white, the boys in Mrs. C.'s corner all black, white girls are with white girls, white boys are with white boys. The boy-girl couples are either both white or both black. Although there were some rumors of interracial dating, only twice did we see a white girl openly conversing with a black boy in the school, and never did we see a white boy with a black girl.

Between classes, although there are three times as many whites as blacks in the school, the blacks seem to hold their own. That is, they are not a quiet minority, but constitute a vocal and vigorous group. It almost seems that the whites are the most quiet, reserved, and private in their interactions, the blacks being more likely to greet each other in loud voices and vigorous gestures throughout the halls. This does not mean that they are disruptive or bothering anyone; they are not. Both black and white students who are present seem to look right through the more vociferous ones. When on the way through the hall of the M & M building with a number of white students, most of whom were quietly going to class, one or two of whom were talking to each other, a black student came running up the stairs laughing loudly, hid behind the door. His friend then came tearing up behind him and passed the door where the first was hidden. Then the first yelled loudly and ran back down the stairs. But all the time, not one white student as much as appeared to have looked at the two. The whites moved right on by into their classes and down the stairs. They appeared not to see it, and if they saw it, they paid no attention.

While for a few minutes one literally cannot move within the mob on the stairs, the hall activity is quickly over, the halls thin out, and then there are only a few students left. Only then does one see a few teachers, moving to their classes, or standing outside their door to let the students in. Most teachers don't move around the building to different stations, but have their own classrooms and meet the students there. The ones that are seen are coming from the male or female teachers' lounges or the community room, or the office. Those few teachers generally walk quickly; seldom does any one of them attempt to monitor the halls' activity. However, it is generally expected that they will be at the door to greet the students coming in. This is strongly stressed by the administrators: "The teacher should be there when the kids come in and greet them -- say something about their hair ... It doesn't even have to be favorable. Ask them why they skipped or something, but show some personal interest and involvement in the kids."

There are a number of things that one sees immediately in Central. For one, the students are tremendously variated. Not only does their race divide them, but many of them are merely children -- light and small -- boys unshaven -- girls in childish dresses -- while others are clearly adults, the boys tall and muscular, the girls developed and capable of bearing children and raising a family. Then, too, social class is evident. Many of the students are poor, and it shows, even in this day when all adolescents wear old clothes. There is a distinct difference between studied and necessitated shabbiness. The former is most seriously practiced by the "freaks," a rather sizeable group who affect long hair, drugs, army fatigues, and the arms-hanging, shoulders-forward walk. They, according to some, are "the rich kids -- they can afford the drugs." They don't look like others who are sallow complected, wearing cheap clothes, and run

down shoes. Then, there are a number of obviously wealthy girls, who dress well and talk of "going to Israel for the summer."

Among the blacks, many of whom keep their coats and hats on all day regardless of the temperature, it is common to "dress down": that is, one does not wear his or her best clothes. Instead they wear slacks, low shoes, a sweater or a blouse, Afro-styled hair (or "Fro" as they say), no jewelry or make-up. Black boys seem to dress alike, not in hippie garb, but with shirts or tight sweaters, belled wash pants, and, of course, Afro hair, for all except the few who occasionally wear their hair short and braided in order to develop a fuller Afro.

Central is a big school, and it takes the full five or six minutes to get from one class to the next, even if the classes are only one floor apart and on the same side of the building. The five minute interval allows little time for lounging or dallying. Students are expected to be in their rooms by the time the bell rings to start the next class and 90% of them are.

This rule concerning promptness is generally adhered to. It fits with the pass system, which is generally enforced and approved by the school staff. Explained simply, the pass system is a device by which the movement of each student can be strictly controlled. In practice, it means each has to have specific, signed permission to be doing anything that all the other students are not also doing. It makes the running of the school much smoother and the students do not seem to resent it. When asked for their pass by an administrator, teacher, or security guard, they show it, if not enthusiastically, at least perfunctorally, flipping it as they go by. If the aide or teacher insists on actually reading it, then the student will stand in a bored and detached manner waiting to be vindicated. Perhaps a good indication of student compliance is

that those who have no pass are quite profuse in their excuses, giving at least the appearance of believing in the worth of the system.

It is only after the bell that the halls again empty and the request for passes begins. The halls are then left to the staff people, one monitor at either end of the two main floors, or a teacher or janitor going somewhere. The ability of the staff to keep the halls free of students during class time is repeatedly cited as being the reason the school is free of trouble. And one reason the halls are free of students is because of the physical structure which allows one monitor at either end of the hall to supervise the entire hall. As Mr. D. put it: "Not like over at Northern where there are so many swastikas and curves that you can spend all day looking for a kid and never find him." Also, students are encouraged to be in class each of the six hours a day; it is only a few, not more than forty, who have to go to the cafeteria for a supervised study hall because their schedule didn't work out correctly.

Of course, the halls aren't completely free of students. There will be a few who have special permission to do this or that errand, and they will have wooden office passes to prove the legitimacy of their mission. And a few may be seen running away from this or that teacher, hiding under the stairs by the gym's back entrance, or sitting on the steps outside where some smoke marijuana, or maybe a few hiding in the lavatory, but it is never very many and never for very long. If a group congregates in the lavatory, it will only be a short time before the lavatory attendant walks in and asks them to leave; if some are hiding under the stairs, an administrator will soon make his swing and chase them to class, or, if they are not students, out of the building. At Central one does not find groups of students unsupervised. They are given only a short time to get to class and then, of course, they are in groups of from fifteen to thirty

with a teacher in close supervision. According to the administrators, the teachers like the pass system. "If a teacher looks out in the halls and sees a kid making trouble, he may not know that kid, but there aren't too many and you can usually trace them down if there aren't that many."

Often there are other people present. The problem of unwanted visitors is perennial in urban schools, simply because they are located in neighborhoods where there are many unemployed dropouts and post-adolescents looking for some action. That is the princple reason why the attendants always stand by the entrance at either end of the main floor. Former or suspended students, or friends of someone or other, come in and while the monitors attempt to keep them out, some are able to wander around. If a teacher leaves his door open on the first floor he will occasionally find one or two of these older youths standing, looking in and surveying the scene. This can be irksom. "I mean, they stand right there, ask 'How are yuh, sweetie?'" but if one's door is closed they don't intrude. And, they don't loiter, but move on to avoid trouble with the administrators, who would not hesitate to call the police should they refuse to leave the building.

But, in sum, because of the physical layout and the skilled use of hall monitors, the halls at City Central are relatively empty most of the day and are not a major place for students to meet.

At 3:10, the halls empty quickly with the majority of students leaving the building a few minutes after the final bell, and those remaining engaged in a specific activity -- basketball, track or student council, or newspaper -- staying and gathered together under teacher supervision.

To ask the question again: What kind of interracial interaction takes place in the halls? The answer is: There isn't any. There is simply no reason to be

any. The halls are used for the business of getting from one place to another -- not for exploring new friendships, loitering, learning or anything else. And the hall monitors, administrators, pass system, and physical structure keep them that way.

The lavatories are another matter. Prior to 1971, there had been no john attendants and we heard numerous reports that there had been racial fighting in the lavatories. But now there were two men and two women always checking the johns, and while there were still problems -- smoking, some narcotics, an occasional fire cracker or minor fire -- it was not often and not for long. Close supervision prevents problems. There was some bi-racial interaction in the lavatories, where in the third floor boys john both black and white would smoke at noon, but the blacks and whites didn't talk. They just smoked in each other's presence.

The Cafeteria

The only other place in the school where one can regularly observe a great many students at the same time is the cafeteria. Central High School keeps a "closed" campus; that is, students are not free to leave between 8:15 and 3:15 each day. Many do, of course, but they do so furtively and risk suspension if caught. During the entire fourth period, which goes from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., there are three half-hour sections during which from four to six hundred students come in to eat their lunch. A student then may eat from 11:30 to 12:00 and then go to class, from 12:00 to 12:30, attending class for the half hour before and after lunch, or he may attend one hour of class and then come to the cafeteria for the 12:30 to 1:00 lunch session. Of course, this means that no students will be given an extensive period of time to lounge around the

cafeteria. One might say that the attitude toward the cafeteria is the same as the attitude toward changing classes: students are given enough time to do what they have to do and no more.

It should be mentioned that during the year a district-wide plan was introduced to eliminate cafeteria service in all the senior secondary schools. The plan was approved by the Board of Education, partly to save money, and partly to prevent further outbreaks of violence which had been occurring in the cafeterias of other schools. Beginning in September, 1972, the cafeteria service was eliminated in Central, the schedule rearranged so that students were given five one-hour periods, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and then sent home for the day. However, for the purpose of this paper, we will still discuss the cafeteria action that took place during the time of the study because it provided some interesting descriptions of black-white interaction.

The food, like that in most schools, was bland, starchy, and cheap. The standard state-approved school lunch costs a student $.36 and consists of meat, usually meatloaf, hamburger, hot dogs, or salisbury steak, perhaps fish, a vegetable, green beans were common, some potatoes, milk, one piece of bread, and some ice cream. Or, one might chose the sandwich line and take a bar-b-que or fish sandwich for $.25. After selecting his lunch, a student may sit where he wishes at any of the long tables.

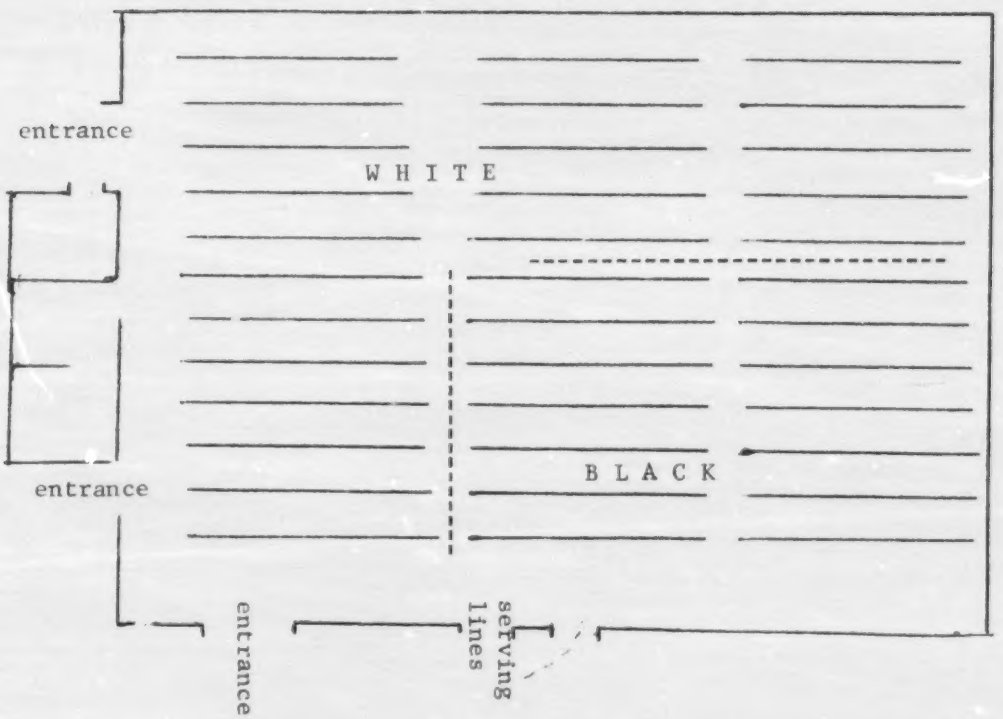
While the cafeteria is supervised -- there are always one or two administrators and a coach on patrol -- the supervision is not oppressive. Those in charge walk around and make their presence felt by quietly admonishing this or that group to quiet down a little, or this or that individual to stop running, or stop throwing his milk or his papers. Their requests are always heeded and the malfactor(s) stops and alters his behavior. Of course, the

administrators are quite skillful at this. I particularly admired Mr. D.'s technique. When he wanted a particular individual to sit down or stop yelling or running, he would never yell across an open space or another table. Rather, he would approach the individual and request in a quiet, but firm manner, that he alter his behavior. As soon as the individual had stopped, paid attention to the request and apparently listened, Mr. D. would turn and walk away, leaving the student, if he wanted to argue, talking to himself, but not overly embarrassed since the administrator, by avoiding yelling and pointing, and by quickly leaving, had taken care not to "face down" the student in front of his friends. Students always did as he requested.

No supervisor, not even the black deputy principal, made a habit of touching students. One time Mr. E., the black deputy principal, did take a student who was about to start a fight by the arm. The student, who was fifty pounds lighter and a foot shorter than Mr. E., immediately flared, "Get off," and squared off in a boxer's stance. Mr. E. did not respond, he just quietly insisted that the student come and the student did so, although in a sullen and angry manner.

The most obvious thing that one sees in the cafeteria is that it is racially split. The blacks always occupied the right, lower half, and never in six months did I see a white student sit there with blacks. Nor did I ever see blacks interspersed in the other part of the cafeteria. It just didn't happen. John, a white, asked my first day if I would like to eat with him. I said, "Yes," but I wanted also to go with George, a black. "Oh, they sit on the other side of the cafeteria -- no law -- it's just the way it is."

Of course, I never heard mention of this phenomenon, but if I asked, the answer was always like John's. There seemed to be no bitterness or animosity



MAP OF CAFETERIA

about the split. Crossing the line is just something one doesn't do. Ramona expressed the same thing:

"Do you have any white friends?"

"Well, if they want to hang around with me, they can. I don't dislike whites none."

"Would you eat with them -- in the cafeteria?"

"Well (said Mary, her friend), that situation just never occurs -- I would -- but I just never had to -- at all."

Of course, one might ask, "What would happen if a black went over and sat with the whites or a white with the blacks," but it's difficult to say because it never happened. It might have been that the person would have been retaliated

upon by members of his own race. As two of the more militant blacks said when I asked if they would consider such a move:

"Well, that'd be awfully hard. You just couldn't do that," said Dan.

John agreed. "You can do it ... and they'll talk about it. But words hurt. They won't hit you. Over at Northern, you do something like that and they'll bust your head, the other blacks will ... Over here, your friends will just talk about you."

It seemed that the blacks were especially anxious to be with each other. Their location was always more densely packed with students than the rest of the cafeteria.

The physical barrier was sometimes fuzzy, but the social barrier was clear. Black and white students would be sitting at the same table, even next to each other, but it always looked like this:

B B B	Wh	Wh
B B	Wh	

In their conversations and interactions there would be no recognition of blacks by whites or vice versa. They would not even look at each other with interest, disdain, animosity, or anything else. Once I was sitting with three blacks and right next to us were four whites. Although they were telling me about what they thought of whites, not one of the white boys even pretended to listen.

So, while there was absolutely no cross-racial interaction in the cafeteria, just as in the halls, there was no trouble; at least, there was no more than might be seen in any place where 1500 adolescents gather each day.

A couple of times small things happened. Two white boys were slinging milk at one another on their straws and some hit a black girl. She got up and told them to clean it off her coat, and when they refused, she hit one. Mr. E. was right there and stopped it.

Another time, on Human Relations Day, which might better be termed "Black Pride Day," two girls, one black and one white, bumped -- the black girl's books fell, and the black then humiliated the white girl into picking them up. An administrator was there and stopped that from continuing also.

But these things are admittedly limited and are no more than might be expected in a place where up to five hundred adolescents gather three times a day, each day, and they did not disturb the air of studied detachment with which whites and blacks viewed each other. Even the deputy principal admitted when talking about the possibility of eliminating the cafeteria that "it's the only place we have trouble now. I think schools try to take on more than they are capable of ... We can't really handle all of these problems. So we're just not going to try."

"But is the cafeteria bad?"

"No -- it's a pain for me... but it's not really bad."

To say that the halls and the cafeteria are split between black and white students is a gross over-simplification. We have already indicated that the whole school is divided into variated parts, rich, middle, poor, black-white, older-younger, those interested in academic achievement, those who give only minimal compliance. One must not imagine that the scene in the cafeteria as purely a we-they situation. It isn't. Among both blacks in their section and whites in their section, the students are further subdivided into their primary groups, centered around their common participation in interests. And the white

groups, according to our observation, are carrying out the same sort of interaction that one would expect to find among the black groups. Whether we ate with blacks or whites, this same phenomenon occurred; the blacks were just as divided by cliques and groups as were the whites. For instance, Dick consistently ate with a small group of black students who sat in the same spot, speaking of the dances they attended, the classes they had in common, the colleges to which they were applying, and/or hoped to attend, and who occasionally played cards.

Another group with whom I associated centered around sports and included three or four basketball or football players, and those who avidly follow the school team, as well as the national basketball championships and agrued endlessly about the relative merits of Kareem Jabber and Wilt Chamberlain.

Another lunch group, at least for a time during January and February, centered around the antics of the pledges into Phi Psi, a black fraternity and great hilarity would ensue when the senior brothers would make the pledges "point;" that is, put their noses on the table and say, "Greetings, brother -- I am here to humbly serve you, brother -- I am anxious to be your brother -- is there any way I can serve you, brother?" All the time they kept their noses on the spot, feet together, hands behind their backs. If the senior brother turned away, the pledge would, like it or not, shoot him the "finger," whereupon the onlookers would laugh.

"Did you see that, Cyrus?"

"Did you see what he did to you?"

"What are you going to do about it?"

Or on "Turn About" day when the senior brothers had to do as they were told by the pledges, some had to join hands and skip around the cafeteria, others had to propose to a particular girl. If it got boisterous, an administrator would

admonish them to keep quiet, which they would do. They did not wish to publicize the fraternity since fraternities were outlawed by school rules.

None of these interactions go on for very long. If there had been a longer cafeteria period, then these interactions might have faded and the students might have had time to get on to other things, but considering that one had only half an hour and he didn't even get seated before ten minutes of it was gone, there was little opportunity to either open up new patterns of interaction or open up possible animosities with students of the other race. The students were in and out before it could happen.

Students even seem enthusiastic about finishing and leaving the cafeteria -- five minutes before the bell they are crowding up at the door and only the administrator's presence there keeps them from breaking into the halls. Then, of course, the cafeteria becomes for a brief moment completely empty and the halls full with the same scene that was described before. When the students from a lunch are back in their rooms, the bell signaling the beginning of "B" lunch sounds, and the second group swarms into the halls, on to the cafeteria where the blacks from the second group sit just where the blacks from the first session sat. It may be said that the black-white interaction in the cafeteria is as non-existent as it is in the halls. The administrators are not bothered by this. They seem to have the attitude that, while the races are separate, at least they are not in violent conflict and that is what counts in Central High. The students are kept moving so quickly that there is little time for informal interaction, and the students use what little there is for their most familiar friendships.

Student Violence

Is that bad? Before one concludes that a non-integrated situation is, ipso facto, an undesirable thing, he should consider the difficult situation with which the school is faced. The area covered by the school is tremendously varied, with affluent areas, terribly poor areas, and a wide range of the in-between. The students as a whole did not have a great deal in common to start with.

And we can't ignore the fact that there really was a lot of racial animosity in that school. Chance conversations and observations would reveal this. Two students, both of whom had been in Mrs. H.'s class, and one of whom had actually broken a window the day I was in there by firing a paper clipp off a rubber band, were talking. "You see that play, 'In White America'?" "No." "Well, we had it last year and it was bad, all the niggers kept yelling, like anytime black was mentioned, they'd yell and scream and yell and raise the fist, and when the word 'white' came up, they'd boo and hollar. I was mad, I mean, I paid to see it and I was with my girl (he's peering around the corner to see if those three blacks were gone when he's talking about blacks) and there's those guys in front of us..." "Black?" I ask. "Yeah, and finally she and I can't see, so I ask this guy to quiet down, and he doesn't, so I get to kicking his seat and he turns around and says he's gonna kick my ass. 'Well,' I says, 'Okay, man, you wanna start it, go ahead,' but he doesn't do anything, just starts talking to his friends and mumbling but they quiet down... And the next day I'm in social studies and my girl comes in crying and tells me that him and his friends are bothering her, like, you know, they come up and act like they're going to hit her and then stop right in front of her face. So I go down and see that bastard and call him out, but he won't come, man, and then later I'm leaving and I see him down by the door and I call and say, 'You wanna get in it, man' and he's all

alone, you know, me and him, but then when he comes out following me, there's six more of them step out. 'Okay, man, I'll wait,' I says, and later he saw me in class and gives me the sign, and I just told him, 'Fuck you, nigger,' (he brought out his index finger) ... Ohhhh, man, later they beat up my girl's brother in the locker room, stabbed him. Yeah, stabbed ... Well, not really stabbed, but slashed in the side." I asked his friend if he had any black friends. "Nah -- we just use them for target practice."

And there was the time I saw an interesting "japping." There was a fire drill and all went out the north door. I was standing there with Mr. G. and the students were all around, at least one or two hundred. Two other teachers were on the steps leading to the M & M building. One large black boy said something to a small white student with red hair, not weighing more than 105 pounds. Then the black called the white over and grabbed him by the arm. He was saying something to him -- I couldn't tell what -- but the white was looking as if he was replying, "What'd I do?" or "Why pick on me?" All the time the black boy was sort of backing him up, holding his own arms out, sort of snapping his fingers and humming, looking around to make sure no one was watching, and then, "BAM BAM," he hit the white kid two shots in the face, open-handed, but hard. The white covered up and turned into his group of white friends, none of whom gave any indication of noticing that their buddy had just been hit. In fact, it looked as if the other three blacks were the only ones that knew what happened. No one else saw it, not the teachers or the students, no one but me. The black then went back to his group and said something like, "Twice, one with each hand," and did a little demonstration of his style. Then the buzzer rang and we moved inside.

All the time, Mr. G. was talking to me about how he was "getting tired of this school. I tried to move last year, but there was no chance. I could have moved a long time ago, but my mother was here and so I stayed for her ... It's too late now ..." and the two teachers on the steps are talking to one another or some student. On the way in I talked to one teacher for a while and asked if he had seen it happen. "Where, where did that happen?" I told him. "Who were they, do you remember? Did those three do it (referring to three black kids who were coming in at the time)?" I told him I just didn't know. Then... "I been here eighteen years and I never saw anything like that." I told him I had seen it twice. "Well, you've seen it twice and you only been here a couple terms."

Once a group of blacks were in the lavatory during third period. One would come out, look around, and go back in. Two more would come out... "Send us a whitey -- gonna kill that mother." Then a white student got up and went to the lavatory and when he came back, had a growing welt over his right eye and his shirt was torn. "They were shoving me ... wouldn't let me out ... These fuckin' niggers. I'm gonna go get my .32, I'm tired of this shit." "Forget it," advised his friend.

Once, in Black Studies class with Mr. B., who was also the basketball coach, we were talking about who was going to start in the game against Northern. He read the names and from the back I heard Raymond, who was black, say, "You mean McCormick, he's out? YAAAAHHHHH!! That means we got no more white boys starting..."

Or, once in a mechanics class, when a car the students were working on was in the garage, a white student and another boy came in to the auto shop and the teacher asked, "Where you been?" "I been thrown out. Here's my pick slips. See?" He had been suspended: "Five days for fighting." I asked him what had

happened, and he explained in a loud voice: "I walked into the cafeteria and two niggers, one of them started giving me the shoulder. I pulled back. Then he kept giving me the shoulder and the other one started kicking me. I went ape shit, man. They were all around me, so my buddies couldn't get to me. This one dude kicking me, and the other punching me. I only got hit once, that I felt, in the eye." Another boy said, "Who did it?" He said, "Two niggers." "Was one of the kids wearing a long blue coat?" "No, I didn't see any coat, I don't remember what they looked like." He said, "This will mean a lot of fights." "For everybody," I asked. He said, "No, just for me. After you fight one of those dudes, they all want to fight you."

One should not get the impression that the school was riot-torn or that these isolated events disturbed the running of the school, or even that all fights were racial. There were as many fights involving black with black and white with white as there were involving black and white. And even when a fight between black and white did occur, there was no general talk by whites of "Let's get the niggers," or by blacks of "Let's get all whiteys." The students seemed more than willing to let it pass off and go on about their individual business. In fact, even as the boy in auto shop was talking, there were three black students within hearing range, and while they paid no overt attention to his words, neither he nor his listeners paid any attention, hostile or otherwise, to them.

Even Herbie, a particularly militant black, was unwilling to let an incident of fighting go too far. "You know, down in that auto shop, that's where the Klan hangs out. I don't know if they're Klan, but that's the way those guys think." I said, "But you've got Mr. F. in there, he's black and a teacher." "Yeah, but he sticks his head under a car, he don't see nothing. So, if he don't see it happen, he don't pay no attention to it. If he sees it happen, then he

does something about it. I was down there and they had this white dude that F. appointed as assistant, and this white dude was checking all the black guys, trying to throw them out of class, and they're after me because I shoot my mouth off a lot. They figure I'm the big mouth. They figure that if they can get to me, then they can get to all the brothers. I was running a welding unit, and someone turned the thing over, it was going to explode or something, you know. I yelled out for everyone to get out of the shop. Eighty-five guys walked out of the shop and this white guy got mad and hit me, threw me down ... (Herbie got excited) And, I took a hacksaw to his ass, I took a hacksaw to that motherfucker's ass. But I got thrown out of school. That night there were two carloads of guys up at my house, my relatives."

"Are they together?"

"Yeah, they're together. They were going to come down and tear the place apart. But I said, 'No, I don't want to do that. I don't want to hurt F.' I told them that I'd go back and see. So I went back and saw the principal the next day, and that white dude was gone -- they never saw him again. So I told my relatives to lay off. They call me chicken. But those guys -- they shouldn't do that to Mr. F."

Like Herbie, others went out of their way not to let these incidents go too far. Ray, a popular, black football player, got into a fight when refereeing a basketball game:

"I was in the gym, I was running an intramural game with these guys."

"Were they white?"

"Yeah, they were all these hippies ... and this one guy started going wild... tearing up the score cards. You know, I thought he was high on something. I told him to cut it out, but he didn't, so I decked him. And then they all started

comin' at me... I hit three of them before they stopped it."

I asked Ray if he thought the incident was racial and he dismissed the thought.

"I know these kids, they're in a lot of my classes. So I don't think it was because they don't like me. I think the kid was high on something."

Just before Ray came into the cafeteria and told me that, I was sitting with about five other blacks, one of whom had said that Ray had gotten into a fight with whites. But, although they all knew Ray, there was no talk of "getting whitey," or taking revenge. I didn't occur to any of them to make a big thing out of it, which is indicative of the way the blacks and whites treated each other -- with a mutual, stand-offishness.

In truth, it was a stand-offishness bred of respect. The blacks whom I knew were hesitant to start anything. They knew they were vastly outnumbered, and they also regarded many of the whites with respect. As John said, "They used to say that one black was worth two whites, but not any more. Some of those whites are really bad ass ... I know this one white kid -- last year about fifteen blacks jumped him... and he had a hold on one black kid and was going to kill him. It was going on in the library and I heard about it and I made it all the way from the cafeteria to the library in about two minutes. I was the only black up there who punched this kid. The other black kids, they were just standing around. After I hit him, he went down and then the others started, but they wouldn't be the first."

He gave another example: "Last year there were about seven white guys beating up one black kid ... Two of the kid's friends over there and one had a razor and they didn't do anything. Some girl came out and threw wine bottles at them and made them go away..."

A white agreed with John. I asked him if it was true that at one time any black could take two whites. "Yeah, it used to be that way. One black guy could... not any more, though. The white guys will swing right back. If the spades should jump me, I can depend on (he looked around)... I can depend on that kid right there. I used to room with him. I can depend on the kids over here at this table, too."

"Do the blacks know that?"

"Yeah, they know, they know they can't get away with beating guys up any more."

The reaction of the school authorities was quick and simple to fights. Anyone involved, regardless of who started the fight, was thrown out, immediately, for five days. The reason, of course, is that the five days will cool the combatants' tempers and prevent retaliation by friends.

There had been considerably more violence in the past. Mr. B explained it when I asked him about trouble in the school. "Well, we don't have much anymore. We had a lot two years ago, in 1969. There were fights all the time in the cafeteria and the halls, but they've calmed down now. It's very calm." I told him that I thought the reason that it was calm was because the blacks and whites had just stopped talking to each other completely. He agreed that that was true.

The Classrooms

The hall periods are brief, the cafeteria periods brief; there are no study halls; activities are limited. Therefore, the only place where large numbers of students can possibly spend time interacting is in the classrooms, and for almost the entire day the student body is diverted into groups of 15 to 30 under the specific charge of one teacher.

Central has over 150 different classes and they are enormously diverse, ranging from mythology to Harlem Renaissance, calculus to security education, advanced English, to special education.

The policy at Central is to avoid tracking by allowing the students to chose the classes, but there is no doubt that only the better students take Mrs. P's Ethics class, where they read literary classics, and the poorer take "practical English," where they spell two syllable words and practice writing sentences, or that only the brighter take "Advanced Functions" and the slower, less able, take "Foundations of Math," where tenth graders struggle to separate and understand the concepts of base, rate and time. Whether students are tracked or not is a point of some contention. According to one teacher, "I mean, of course, they're tracked. Those counselors know what they're advising and they make sure the bright kids go in mythology -- the slow ones in Girl Talk." But the assistant principal for curriculum was quick to point out that, "At least we've offered them the opportunity. We've put it on a piece of paper that they can, if they wish, take Mrs. P's class. If they decide not to, that's their responsibility, not ours."

Except for the required courses, i.e., physical education, driver education and security education, the racial makeup within the classrooms seldom parallels the racial makeup of the school. The attempt to diversify seems to enhance internal segregation. Two English classes, Harlem Renaissance and Themes in Ebony, are, but for one or two students, all black. And some very advanced classes, such as mythology, French, and statistics, are, but for one or two blacks, all white.

The students themselves refer to most of the classes as "college prep" or "non college prep" and they know which is which. Of course, many courses

fit strictly into neither category, such as art, drama, music, and so forth.

It is important to note that Central does not separate students by grade. Sophomores, juniors and seniors regularly sit in the classrooms together. Of course, the chemistry class will have all juniors and seniors. The Foundations of Math will have mostly sophomores, but the many cross-tracked classes will be broken up more evenly among students from all three grades.

The classroom interaction is difficult to explain and needs some background. First of all, it is clear that because of certain basic assumptions -- subject matter expertise of the teacher, downward communication flow, the doctrine of adolescent inferiority, and the assumption that talking is teaching, and learning is listening -- the classes are structured so that the teacher articulates and structures the experience, doing most of the talking, questioning, moving about, while students sit, watch, wait, listen and speak when spoken to. This pattern holds true for American high schools in general, and Central is no exception.

The organization of the classrooms is remarkably similar. The rooms are all square and the chairs are fixed in rows or an occasional semi-circular arrangement so that all eyes can be fixed on the teacher. And the teachers, true to their subject matter speciality, take that center position and use it to pass on the material that they consider important. The basic assumptions of subject matter speciality, downward communication, and teacher centrality are never openly questioned. And, of course, students know what to do. They come in, sit, face the front, and wait to see what the teacher will tell them to do. Of course, it is never quite that orderly. But the organizational structure expects the teacher to have the central authority role and everything is set around that expectation.

For the teacher, order is what counts. As one said:

> They leave you alone if there is order. All the administrators here have the same philosophy -- if they don't when they get here, it doesn't take long.

Of course, not all teachers can do this effectively, and for them life at Central isn't easy:

> I work my tail off to try and be a good teacher; see these materials, I've collected all of them. I've been off a couple of years, but I'm trying to do what's best. I even took a business day to go across town and visit a teacher's class that everyone respects as a good teacher. Hell, I don't see anyone else doing that. Mr. M. came in one day to observe me, I'm trying to be student oriented, see that's the new approach, isn't it? And he tells me that the kids are too noisy and too many kids are walking around the room. So Mr. P. chews me out on Mr. M's recommendation. They tell me I'm not going to get tenure unless my classroom straightens up. (Her voice is cracking and her eyes are watering). I'll tell you this -- they gave me a poor evaluation and I'm bitter. All they're concerned about is quiet classes.

If a teacher for some reason or other is unable to handle the class effectively, it is regarded as his personal fault and not a structual problem. Teaching style does not differ greatly. That is not to say that all teachers are the same. The skill with which the role is implemented varies greatly; some teachers are highly skilled at the business of keeping themselves in the center and keeping the students on the subject matter. A few are completely inept. As one might expect, the teachers who teach chemistry, higher mathematics, advanced English classes, do this better than those who teach Girl Talk, Foundations of Math, and Auto Shop, because the former have students who give a higher degree of compliance, and the standard style can be more effectively implemented.

An interesting thing that we consistently saw was that rarely did any teacher use the whole hour for instruction. Thirty to forty minutes was usually the outer limit, with the mean being something around thirty-five minutes. That was probably the only way that they could accommodate the demand for one hour of

teaching. The little part of almost every period is given to the students to "study" or "do their homework," and from there it rapidly goes into small group interaction. By the time the bell rings, almost all of the students are busily engaged in their private interactions, and in many classes are lined up against the door waiting to go. Another thing that we consistently noted was that a considerable amount of student class time was used by the teacher to get the homework or tests corrected.

One additional point of a general nature should be made. Although I will show some exceptions to this when I come to a more detailed description, in general the black and white students stayed almost completely away from each other in the classroom, just as they did in the corridors and cafeteria. The pattern was always the same. Black students would sit together, talk together, pass their papers back and forth to one another, and whites would do the same with whites. Most teachers accepted this. "I don't like it, but I can't do anything about it." And blacks and whites spoke easily of it. "Hey, man, we gotta stick together, ya understand." Therefore, in order to see any interaction we had to look long and carefully. One might ask, "Why continue the study -- there's nothing to study." But that is not true. Although they did not interact often, they did have a very definite pattern of non-interaction. It was a studied, not a random, set of non-interactive behaviors. And, furthermore, their non-interaction had what I consider to be some very definite and very influential effects on the behavior of everyone in the school.

The Retreating Teacher

Let us begin by describing what we consider to be the most interesting -- that of the "retreating teacher." As stated, the organization of the school is structured so that the teacher is the physical and organizational center of the

room. Without his direction little happens. But a significant number of teachers seem to go out of their way "not to teach." That is, they retreat from that position and seem to want to de-statusfy themselves. For instance, Mr. P. always came in fourth period about five minutes late, whereupon he would take attendance, exchange some banter with the black students up front, then ask them how they felt, or respond to a personal question: "Hey, is your hair getting thin?" "No, man, it's just that I combed it different ... Like it?" Or, a boy asked, "Hey, whatsamatter, you look down."

"Buck's lost, man, that's my team."

"I didn't see the game -- I had to do some work."

Then, George, the junior class president,came in selling candles to raise money for the junior class. George, with a big grin as always, mumbled a little about the candles being on sale, and the teacher, who apparently felt he was ineffective, spent the next few minutes giving George a lesson in salesmanship.

"George, do these people know about your candles? You gotta tell 'em so they'll buy some. Come here."

George did not mind this at all, and, smiling broadly, he gave the whole box to Mr. P., who took them out, laid them on the lecturn, bought one himself, told the class about their quality, their construction, and sold three. "See, George, you gotta present your product so your customers will want them." Then he somehow got on the subject of an announcer on the radio in Chicago when he grew up who got so excited about presenting his product, Hamm's Beer, that he drank a whole case of it during one ball game.

By this time the period was twenty minutes old and while he was doing these things, the students were in what one might generously refer to as a state

of disaray. That is, the sixteen students in the room were partly listening, partly sleeping, and partly talking among themselves.

Like all classes, of course, the blacks were sitting together in a particular section, in this case up front in the center, and it is they who seem to be the most interested. That may simply be because the teacher was right in front of them and talking directly to them. Racially, the placement of students looks like this:

Teacher

White	Black	Black	White
	Black	Black	White
White	Black	Black	White
		Black	White
Black			
Black		White	
	White	White	

It was not just the 14th of December that he avoided teaching. He followed a similar pattern every day we were in his class. If he did have some academic work that he considered important enough to mention, he would immediately leave it if something else came up.

One day he started on railroad milage. Another teacher walked in:

"Hey, I fixed your TV."

"Oh, excuse me," said Mr. P., and walked out, not to return for twenty minutes.

When he did return, he told us that he wanted to talk about the increase in railroad milage between 1830 and 1840, and while he was reading the graph from the book, not one student was paying a bit of attention. The blacks were talking among themselves about basketball. William plays varsity -- Raymond, Robert and he were in the center of the room listening to his assessment of the opposition. George, as usual, had left after a short stay. The white girls on the other side were either looking out the window or sleeping. One was angered

by an earlier exchange with the teacher, who asked her, "Hey, you're acting flakey -- you been taking those pills again?"

"I ain't taking no fuckin' pills," she replied, and then sat down as he told her to.

John, one of the white boys in back, was reading a magazine and the two black girls in the back were doing what they wished. One was reading a novel, the other, looking horribly bored, turned and asked me who I was. When I told her she said, "Don't you get tired of sittin' in these classes?"

"Yes, do you?"

"Yes, we never do anything in here," and she showed me some novels she was reading. Another boy on my right said, "I wish they'd burn all these books. Then we could have school on tape."

Now, all the time the teacher was talking about railroad milage, but I could not find one student who even watched. Some had their books open, but did not look at them, others just sat and stared or talked to their friends. This apparently didn't bother Mr. P. No individual was getting singularly disruptive so he just went on until he apparently became bored and decided to explain his attitude, that, although America has a lot of problems, "It is still the best country in the world."

While students openly admitted that they did nothing in there, some liked it. John came over one day. "Hey, you're trying to see all kinds of different situations, aren't you? Well, there's Mr. T., you should go to his class, it's the opposite of this one. He's real strict. Like, he doesn't take anything from the kids. Like, there's a line at the door and when the bell rings, you're on one side or the other, and if you're on the other, he sends you out."

"Do you like him?"

"No, I hated him... I learn more this way -- last year the kids just rebelled against him."

Mr. P.'s classroom behavior was somewhat unusual, but not extreme. There were many teachers who seemed to have little interest in being subject area experts and actually found ways to retreat from their role. Since the teacher's personal qualities were less than charismatic, the students would either just sit alone or retreat into their private interactions, which were, of course, uniracial. They didn't seem to care that much about what the teacher did.

A particular biology class was another good example of this. The teacher, after taking attendance for twenty minutes, wrote a few phrases on the board: "Adam and Eve," "spontaneous generation," and "evolution," and told the students that "For the next forty minutes you are to write an essay on how you think the world started, and here are three possibilities which, you know, we discussed last week. I did this with my college prep class and they liked it.. It will do you good. Teach you to think for a change... which is something you don't do often."

I asked a student in the back, "Is this a college prep class?" "Nooooo-nooooo."

Then the teacher, having given a set of minimal directions, walked around, looked here and there at the kids who, seeming to only half understand the assignment in the first place, were not doing much to finish an essay. Instead they sat and talked to their friends, or some fooled around. Two boys in the back were throwing things to the front. The teacher, a football coach, known for his quickness in grabbing errant students, was not doing much to structure the situation. He had, for all practical purposes, retreated from the center,

leaving the students to their individual devices. As he passed my chair in the back, he asked, "How do you like being in the 'dropout class.'"

Again, the black kids were in the center and talked to blacks, whites to whites, and there was no cross-racial interaction. The teacher had said that they could discuss the assignment in their groups and that was what they did -- with their friends.

There was another thing that would occur in those classes where teachers retreated. When they put up time-killing techniques, they would then try to control the class by interacting with individual groups of students. Mr. P. would talk to the blacks about basketball; others would go to the back and interact with other students about matters of equal importance.

Mr. S., after explaining he couldn't teach his class because he had a cold, said we could do what we wanted. But, predictably enough, he came around in the last half hour to feed in partially didactic comments to different groups. It seemed that when the teachers retreated, they seemed to make attempts to control the situation by walking around and speaking individually to students who had, by that time, entered into their private group interactions. Sometimes the teachers made didactic inputs hoping, it would appear, to teach on a small group basis what he was unwilling or unable to teach to the whole class. But often they would just engage in small talk.

That kind of behavior on the part of teachers was just too common to be attributed to some individual quirks. It seems that for many teachers it was the way to accommodate the situation. And, although boredom showed all over the faces and bodies of students, who were told to, literally, "Amuse yourselves, but stay in your seat and don't leave the room," for a whole hour, they never got together and demanded that they be taught something.

There is an additional point. In Mr. P.'s class, the students did not appear to be college prep students. In fact, it was plain that they were "regular." But in Mr. S.'s class and Mrs. N.'s sociology class, which were college prep, there were differences. When the teacher retreated in a regular class, many students would talk, some would play cards, some would just sit and stare and one or two would study. In the more academic classes, there would be less sleeping, less group work, but more individual studying. But in both types of classes the students would fragmentize as soon as the teacher retreated. It was to be expected and always happened, of course, that the racial lines were firmly drawn, and the blacks interacted with blacks, whites with whites.

At first, I had trouble with this phenomena of the retreating teacher. I thought it perhaps was a temporary abberation or that City had an unfortunate selection of teachers. But it was too common to be ignored or attributed to individual differences. On the part of many teachers there was a decided unwillingness to take clear command of the class and act as an instructional leader. Of course, this was not true of all teachers; there were those who were extremely task-oriented and they will be discussed, but there were enough to make it a regular phenomena.

The question is: Why did they do it? Why do so many not do what the curriculum insists that they do? At this point, we might assume a functionalistic explanation: if enough people act in a certain way in a given environment, then those actions have to somehow make sense in that environment. In other words, the duty of the investigator is to look for that behavior, and try to explain how that behavior fits into the environment. Given this, it seems that we should pay attention to one basic issue; that is, that the students in City, except in those few classes where all were highly motivated, have little in common. One does not

walk in a class and assume that the students all want to learn or that they have something in common. They are divided by race, class, neighborhood, and by the usual adolescent grouping patterns, so the teacher more often than not is forced to paste a facade of unity on a very diverse population. There is little that one could call value consensus among the students of Central and without value consensus there is no real organization, no collective spirit, simply an aggregate of disparate individuals and small groups. In trying to come up with some functional explanation for the phenomenon of the "retreating teacher," we are suggesting that by retreating from the center and going around trying to hold the class in some reasonable order informally, he is recognizing and adjusting to the lack of common purpose and interest in the class.

We must remember that this holding the class together one way or another is the teacher's main job. If a teacher gets fired from City Central it is because he cannot control the class, not because the students are not learning.

One thing was clear -- the teachers who did not teach were not being chastized for it. I asked the administrative assistant about teacher freedom: "That's the trouble, they're too free. They're free not to teach."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, they get in there and they talk about this and that and forget what it was they were hired for."

"But what do you look for in a teacher?"

"For a teacher who can handle himself personally in front of the class; a teacher who, although he might have a personal problem, wouldn't let it show. When he gets up in front of kids, I want him to make them believe that he really cares about his subject matter, whether he does or not. If he doesn't, that's all right with me. If he had some trouble that day, if he had some trouble with his wife, or he had some trouble with his family, I don't want it to show."

But when I tried to get him to be specific, he came back to the same thing. He wanted a teacher "who cared."

"But is discipline a common reason for not retaining a teacher?" I asked.

"In more cases than I would like to admit, that is true."

The principal was more specific. He wanted a teacher who maintained order, and a teacher who wouldn't maintain order was "not welcome in the school." The necessity of maintaining order in a place where there was little or no intrinsic order was difficult and I think it accounted for retreating teachers.

To explain this more fully, I would like to examine the classroom of a teacher who was completely unable to maintain order. And one teacher I knew of who was being threatened with firing because of her inability to do this was Mrs. H. Her classroom was the most chaotic I ever saw and can give one an idea of what happens to a teacher who is completely unable to handle the situation. Her particular class was called "Man in Sports." Obviously, by its title, it was meant not as a college prep class, but as one of those for the slower students. There were twenty boys in the class, about two-thirds white, and one third black. I went in and sat down as I always did, in a back chair. I asked a boy if I was in someone's seat. "No ... (Then) Yeah, it's somebody's seat, but you can sit anywhere you want -- nobody cares."

I asked what they did in class. "Nothing ... We don't do anything in here. We never do."

He was a big, open-faced, white boy, and he then went on to pull out a deck of cards, whereupon two black kids came back, sat down, and he started dealing tunk rummy. No preliminaries... "Do you want to play?" It appeared as if it was the routine in there. There were two other card games going on in there, all interracial. I was surprised. Most of the time the small group, social

interaction is uniracial -- black-black, white-white, never white-black. Other kids in the room were throwing things, literally: A book, a ball of paper. Others were walking around, talking. One student came back and confided in me, "This is the worst class in the school, but you'll get a good impression of what we do in here, 'cuz these assholes wouldn't act any different if the President was sitting back here." Mrs. H. came in, fussed with her books and papers for ten minutes while the students moved around, talked, played cards. Some just sat and did nothing -- one read his "Drag Strip" magazine.

"All right, everybody sit down -- today we have two oral presentations... First we have Fred." There was a lot of cheering at that, and Fred, a long-haired, lanky boy, got up and read his sixty-eight word speech which was about a pilot who was shot down in German territory and wised up to the fact that the Germans were pretending to be French. He read it with his head down, mumbling most of the time. All the time the rest of the boys were talking, playing cards, looking out the window; three blacks were setting up their tape recorder. Mrs. H. tried to evoke a little discussion about the speech by asking Fred and others about the character, the plot, the element of surprise, but she got nowhere. Neither Fred or anyone else cared or was willing to pretend he cared. Some students in the back half-listened, more in the hope that something would happen than in what was actually happening, but that was all.

Then the open-faced, white kid got up and was to run his tape, but he had forgotten it and had to go to the library to get it. The teacher said, "We can take a pause," whereupon the action didn't change at all. Five minutes later the kid came back and he, the teacher, and the three black kids worked on the tape recorder for five more minutes before getting it going.

All of a sudden Mrs. H. turned around and said to two boys, who had been talking quietly, "John and Gerald ... GET OUT." Two kids in the middle, probably the least offensive kids in the room, gave each other a sort of knowing smile, got up and left. Then the tape recorder came on and Brian got up and said, "These are some poems by John Keats that we thought were interesting." He turned up the tape and on it were three of Keat's poems read by three different boys. Each reading was slurred, hasty, and in a mocking tone.

The tape took one and one-half minutes and Brian then got back up. "These are three poems that we liked from a book by John Keats." The recording was still going and ran into another section of the tape on which someone said, "And he ate a whole box of chocolate Ex-Lax," at which the whole class was united in laughter. That was the first time the whole class was united in anything.

To evaluate these presentations, the teacher passed out forms on which the students were to write their opinions. I read a number of them as they were passed over: "It was good," "A+," "Very Interesting."

That was the end of class. For the remainder of the period we sat and the action that had been going on, card playing, talking, moving around, playing with the tape recorder, continued.

Two card games, one all black, one mixed, black and white, kid throwing something across the room, talking, and some few just sitting and staring.

The teacher walked around,and I felt sorry for her. But she would talk to a group of card players and ask them to prepare a presentation on card playing. Then she would turn to another group and try to talk to them about next week's work. She picked up some papers that were deliberately thrown down by a boy, who then looked at her and told her he hadn't done it. She was

trying to get some entree into making the class a didactic experience, but it failed, miserably. I wasn't terribly surprised at the class. There are probably many such classes in the tougher, urban high schools.

At the end of the class she confronted one black student who was wadding up sheets of notebook paper and shooting baskets at the wastebasket. "How old do you have to be before you realize you're not to throw paperwads?" She was standing directly in front of him, her hands on her hips. He said, "I gotta catch the bus." She said, "Answer me. Don't you know the difference between right and wrong?" The student said, "Hey, get out of my way. I told you I had to catch a bus." She said, "No, not until you answer me." At that, the student gave her a shove and she fell back over a chair, and the student moved quickly out of the class.

She picked herself up, walked over, and tearful and trembling, said, "What can I do? I'm just new to high school teaching and I thought the latest thing was to have student-centered classrooms, so thats what I'm trying to do. What an I doing wrong?" She then saw the principal walking b the room and she went and explained the situation to him.

That is an extreme case -- the worse we saw -- but the fact is that she made more of an attempt to teach than some other teachers. Although her organization and planning were terrible, she didn't retreat. But other teachers taught as little as she did, but were still able, by force of their personality or skill, to make it work. That she wasn't able to it was regarded by the principal as an indication of her inability to teach; teachers who simply retreated were not as subject to tha accusation.

The question for me at that point was to look at some decidedly better teaching in a similar classroom to see what these students did in a class

where the teacher was not so reticent about asserting himself, or so poor at organizing.

Mr. W. taught U.S. History and seemed to be a good teacher. There were about twenty students in the class, six of them black, and they were sitting together at one table. The whites were seated throughout the remainder of the room. The teacher came on strong right away with his loud voice. He was a young man, 26 or 27, very serious about his subject matter. He started by calling on individuals to read the newspaper clipping they had cut out. One read his clipping about the POW's in Vietnam. As soon as he finished reading Mr. W. lead a discussion on the POW problem. He wrote "POW" on the board and asked the students what it meant. Two answered: "Prisoner of War." Then Mr. W. went into the two conditions layed down by the Vietnamese for the release of the POW's: withdrawal of American troops, and stopping of the support for the Vietnamization by the U.S. Then, for ten minutes, he talked about Vietnamization, about the POW's, about the problems of getting them out, about the difficulty of not getting them out. But while he was doing this, only about ten of the students were paying even moderate attention; the others were doing what they wished, but were not disturbing the class. Keith was passing something back and forth; another black boy in the back was just sitting with his head down. Mark was moving around the room and answering Mr. W.'s questions at the same time. There were two girls talking to one boy up front, and most were just not paying very much attention. Every once and awhile they would perk up when the teacher spoke of a particular issue. One girl read a clipping on the issue of pollution, and Mr. W. gave a little talk about what had happened to detergents in a nearby city where a law had been passed limiting the amount of

of phosphates in detergents to 8%, while the state had passed a law limiting the amount of phosphates in detergents to 8.7%. As he spoke of this conflict in the governments of the city and State a few seemed interested, but as he went to another topic, the interest faded. Four students were called on, two on the POW's question, one on detergents, one on the president's visit to China, but all the rest of the talking was done by the teacher. Students would answer once in awhile if he called on them directly, but more would talk very quietly among themselves. While they were careful not to disturb him, they just didn't appear to care. He was a serious and well-intentioned teacher, but as for student interest and involvement, there didn't seem to be much more than I saw in Mrs. H.'s or Mr. B.'s classes. Mr. W. kept them in order and did his job by keeping up a one-way dialogue. By his monopolization of the conversation he was able to paste a facade of unity on a set of diverse student activity and interest.

Now there was something in common among those teachers' actions in the classes described: that is, classes where the demeanor of the students indicated that they are not terribly interested in learning, or at least in the processes of instruction. The teacher may, simply retreat to work with or maybe simply interact with individuals. Or, if he does decide to be an aggressive and assertive teacher, such as Mr. W. then the students, while not displaying outright rebellion, will show signs of individual avoidance behavior, and the class will appear almost as ineffectual as it would if the teacher did nothing. Either way, it appears that the teacher's problem is to create unity from diversity and if he can't create unity, then he must find a way to defuse potential conflict. Teachers who retreated may have been just as effective as those that were assertive. There is little to bind the participants into some basic agreement on the worth of academic achieve-

ment from which they might be free to engage in a commonly based and productive enterprise. Thus far I would tentatively suggest that the division of the student body by race was a very important contributor to the diversity and lack of commonality among the students and hence, the teachers' behavior.

Let us review. City High demands that the teacher take the students in groups of 15-30 and instruct them in his particular speciality for six periods a day. Success at this depends on consensus among those students, consensus on how to behave, on what is and isn't worthwhile and consensus that the teacher is doing what they want to do. But consensus is lacking. Just because students come to class does not mean that they have to show enthusiasm or even interest in the subject, or that they have anything in common with the teacher or the other members of the class. In fact, that there was little consensus in those classrooms, it seemed that the teacher behaved in such a way as to accommodate the situation. Some taught or pasted a facade of unity, some retreated and defused potential conflict and opposition by moving among the students and interacting. But, either way it appeared that little learning took place.

But there is one other place interracial interaction occurs and that is in the higher achieving classes where the teachers took very definite command and structured the class according to the subject matter. In Mrs. S.'s English class, grammar was being taught to a group of what appeared to be juniors and seniors. There were seventeen students in the class -- four black, the rest white. I would have to say it was one of the neatest-run classes I have ever seen. In back of the room on the blackboard were listed the vocabulary words -- "Vocabulary for January 4th, 3rd and 1st period," Vocabulary for January 5th, 4th period," "Vocabulary for

for January 6th, 3rd and 4th period." And on the bulletin board were a number of newspaper clippings, one about a boy getting his Ph.D. at the age of eighteen another about getting jobs when one gets out of high school, another about college enrollment increasing, and there was a quotation from Seneca in the front.

On the table at the front of the room was a lecturn and a desk piled with books. Mrs. S.'s housekeeper's sense of orderliness was obvious -- in a school where almost all the desks were carved up, she was one teacher who believed in preventing the defacing of furniture. She was fussing about it when I came in: "I just washed that desk," "that girl always writes on that desk. I'll talk to her tomorrow."

There were six black students in the room. Three were right in the middle, up front; one over by the side, and two by the door. The rest of the twenty-three students were white. Mrs. S. said to one boy by the door "Did you take your test yesterday?" He said no, so she gave him the test and told him to go down to the guidance office and take it. He left. Mrs. S. makes her own lessons. She handed out one sheet with a number of vocabulary words printed across the top, i.e., maime, malice, mandate, ... and then she had devised twenty sentences to follow the words, the idea being that the student was supposed to put the correct word in each sentence. Ten minutes were devoted to privately working on this, during which time no one said a word. Then she gave back the previous day's tests and the students corrected one another's, under her direction. She picked them up at the end of Wednesday's class, handed them out at the beginning of Thursday's class, the students corrected them and told her what the marks were, or else handed

them in after correcting them and she got the marks from the tests.

All the time she was doing this, she assigned each student to read a sentence, or she'd call on somebody and he'd say, "The English Winston Churchill's American _____," and they would fill in the word "namesake." Her enthusiasm for the task was obvious. She seemed to genuinely like being there. She kept hovering over the entire class, coaxing, searching out the correct answers with looks and breath holding, gentle hints, chiding those who gave wrong answers and by these techniques added on to her extensive preparation. She kept complete control of everything that went on. The students, all of whom seemed to enjoy the lessons, were as completely with her as I ever saw them with any teacher.

Following the vocabulary lesson they took another test, which they then corrected. This was on dependent clauses. On this one each person would read a sentence, such as "The captain knew that the steps had been severely damaged in the hall," and of course, the idea was to select the dependent clauses, tell why it was a dependent clause, and what it depended upon. Again, everybody was attentive, everybody was good, students knew and volunteered the answers, and looked as if they cared about them. When they were a little wrong they acted as if it mattered. It was a good class and she was a good teacher, but there was one very interesting thing. That is, the white and black students interacted easily with one another over the matter of the work. A white would turn around to exchange paper with and talk to blacks, and black students did the same to whites. That does sound like a fairly simple act, but in that school it was a rarity. It occurred only where the teacher was highly structured and the students highly compliant, as in better academic classes.

However, there were other structured academic classes where it did not

occur. I am reminded of Mr. Y.'s chemistry class which, naturally enough, contained a high number of academically oriented students. In this particular case, there were eighteen whites and seven blacks. I would consider Mr. Y. a good sound teacher, but his personal technique was different from that of Mrs. S. That is, he did not insert himself so strongly into the classroom interaction, but rather had the students doing their work in groups and in sections. And in his class the color barrier was complete. Six of the blacks worked together on one side and the whites either individually or in dyads or triads worked with one another.

In sum, there was a combination of two phenomenon extant in Mrs. S.'s class: (1) academically motivated students and (2) pleasant, but rigid atmosphere where the teacher kept complete control of the room. Where the second phenomenon was absent, as in chemistry or conservation, or physics, the blacks remained isolated from the whites.

The strong converse of this is that black and white students were also interacting in Mrs. H.'s class where they, too, had some common sense of academic achievement -- they ignored it -- and the teacher was unable to do anything.

Taking the two dimensions, teacher directiveness and student compliance with the norm of academic achievement, and placing them on two axis we might suggest that this is what it looks like.

Student Compliance With Norm on Academic Achievement

Teacher Directiveness	LOW	HIGH
LOW	Students break into partially segregated groups, carry on private, non-task oriented activities (A)	Students break into segregated groups and pursue studies. (B)
HIGH	Students exhibit avoidance behavior while teacher carries on classroom interaction alone. Blacks and whites separate. (C)	Students and teachers together. Blacks and whites interact. (D)

And only in the upper left extreme of A and the lower right extreme of D did we find enough black-white interaction to deserve mention.

These are the places where one can, we think, reasonably expect some black-white interaction to occur. Otherwise, it just doesn't seem to happen. And even when we say it did happen, we admit that we had to look very closely for it.

We will return to summarize these phenomena in our conclusion, chapter V, but there is another point which should be stressed immediately. That is, as we have attempted to point out, the structure of the school's organization is such that black-white or any other type of interaction is positively discouraged. In fact, it is only accidental that students interact at all. There is no homeroom period; there is only a few minutes for passing in the halls; cafeteria period is short and heavily supervised; and the classes, offically at least, are such that the most commonly expected occurance would be to find the teacher talking and the students listening. The fact that white and

blacks sledom interact is not surprising.

AN INCIDENT OF BLACK-WHITE INTERACTION

Thus far we have presented a situation whereby the blacks and whites have reached a mutual but unspoken agreement to avoid one another as much as possible, and we tentatively suggested that the split effects the teachers' classroom behavior Only in a few classrooms were the teachers able to change this. Again, looking for functional explanations, I think, personally, that they behaved this way to avoid the unpleasant outcomes that would result from interaction. There were some deep hatreds in those students and when they did interact, those hatreds became evident. There was one very good example of this, which I was fortunate enough to witness.

I went to Mr. H., the drama teacher, and asked him if I could sit in. He said, "Sure." So I went down to the auditorium, walked in and sat down in the middle. Fourteen students drifted in.

There were four blacks in the class -- Frank, an avowed revolutionary, his friend Raymond, one girl and another boy, all sitting right next to the door. When they came in, Raymond was demonstrating his guitar picking ability to Frank. "Gonna get good with these six chords." There were three white students down in the left hand corner. One was a big boy, two girls. There were five girls in the center; a few rows in front of the blacks were three more whites -- one boy and two girls. In front, right next to the stage where Mr. H. was standing, were three white girls. The students were scattered over half the auditorium. Mr. H. didn't call attendance or try to get them together, he just started right off with, "What did you think of the play?" The play was something they had read about racism the day before. The original story was about a Jew in a non-Jewish school. Apparently as the play

evolved, the Jew entered the Army with gentiles and as the play evolved, he found he couldn't be friends with gentiles. The play had been updated in 1960 and the Jew had been changed to a black, who was thrust into an all-white situation.

Up to when Mr. H. asked, "What did you think of the play?", the four blacks had been talking together. Then they shifted down in their seats, and for a while didn't say much. But Mr. H. was directing his questions at them, so Frank replied, "Unreal." "It's just not a real situation. You just wouldn't find one black in the center of all those whites." So Mr. H. tried a different tactic. He said, "What did you think of the action of Morris?" (A white in the play who rejected the black.) Again, the blacks shifted down, and didn't say much. Some of the white students volunteered that they thought it was pretty good. The big boy and two girls, down in the corner were playing around with each other and giggling. Mr. H. had the attention of the three white girls in the center and talked to them a little bit about what they thought of this one particular character, Morris. Then he said, "What did you think of John, the black?" Again, Frank volunteered "I didn't think John was acting the way a black would act, because I didn't think you'd ever find one black in the middle of all of those whites, in that white place." This went on for a few minutes, with Mr. H. doing most of the talking about the play, and the kids sort of half listening, half carrying on with each other. But then, finally, Frank, who looked bored, said, "Mr. H., I've got a question. "What is it?" "How come verybody hates whites?" What is wrong with whites?" Mr. H. said, "Do you mean how come there is prejudice?" Frank said, "No, how come Chinese brothers hate them, African brothers hates whites, Indians hate whites, Spanish hate whites, how come everybody hates whites?"

While Frank was talking it was quiet, everybody was looking at him. Mr. H. tried to keep it on an academic level. He tried to explain it as, "Sometimes we hate people when we don't know about them." At that the blacks all went, "Awwww, shit." and slumped down in their seats, as if to say, "Here's another honkey explanation of racial prejudice." They wanted to know if he hated whites. He said, "Yes, I do." "What do you mean?" He said, "I call myself a revolutionary." Mr. H. said, "You mean a militant?" Frank said, "No, not a militant, a revolutionary." At this the big white student down front said, "Do you mean you're prejudiced?" Frank said, "No, I'm not prejudiced. I walk around here with a smiling face on, I say hello to whites, I interact with them, I get along with them. But I'm a revolutionary, I wouldn't do anything for them. They come down to my neighborhood and they're on their own." The white student insisted, "you're prejudiced." Frank said, "No, I'm not prejudiced. I told you I'm not. I'm a revolutionary." The white student and Mr. H. asked him what he meant by that. As Frank explained it, he wanted to make the black race supreme in the United States. Their reaction, "Why should the black race be supreme." He said, "Well, whites were supreme. We were your niggers for a long time, we were your slaves, we had to hoe your gardens, haul your cotton. We're not going to do it anymore. We're going to be supreme." The whites, at this time, were getting excited, and the blacks were all with Frank. Some white girls insisted both races could get along. Frank's reaction was that he "had to come to your school, had to get along because it's your school. I go upstairs and see the 'man,' he's white. I go to your white hospital down the street and I see your white cops. But I'm just putting on a face. There's only one thing I'm for and that's blacks." The white boy right in front of Frank reacted by saying, "What about my brother?

My brother got thrown out of school four times last year. It isn't just a white school." Frank's reply was "I spent all last year out of school, man. What do you think of that!" One white girl said, "Well, they hate us because we're more advanced than they are." Frank didn't buy that, "whites destroyed civilizations more advanced than theirs." Mr. H. who kept trying to keep the discussion on an academic level, put it as exploitation, because richer whites exploited poorer blacks, which was a natural human way to behave. Frank didn't buy that, either. He insisted there was something intrinsically wrong with whites.

What excited the whites was when Raymond told them that he really hated them. "There's no such thing as being friends with a white man. There's no such thing as a black and a white being friends." But some whites said it was possible and that they had black friends. One white girl said, "We've got two blacks in our family." Raymond derided her, "What do they do, shine your shoes, do your laundry, carry the clothes?" "No, they're husbands. And they've got beautiful children." Frank laughed and slapped hands with Raymond. "We'd better do without these psychedellic babies, get these blacks together so they don't go inter-marrying with whites." Raymond said, "They're not black, they're colored." Mr. H. asked what the difference was. He said, "A colored man will accommodate the whites, call them into his home, pretend to get along with them. A black will have absolutely nothing to do with them." Frank also said, "The thing about colored, they've got no pride. They've got no pride in their nappy hair, their big lips and their broad nose, and their black skin. The blacks have pride in that -- I'm proud of that."

The big white student down in the front was the most verbal. Not as articulate as Frank and Raymond, but more verbal and angry. He insisted that

blacks and whites get along. But Frank went back and repeated that he came to this school and he got along because he had to get along. He repeated his former statement about putting on his face. He accommodated the whites, but he hated them all the time. The only thing he wanted, he said, was "black power, black revolution, and black supremacy." All the blacks were together on this, clearly together. All the whites, too, including the teacher, were banded together, and told Frank he was wrong. Then a girl down front said, "What about black guys and white girls?" Raymond got excited about that. "You know what they're after? They just want to take you out to see what you can give them. And that's all. You know George? All those white girls after George? He didn't go after one of them, they were all after him" He added, "Yeah, and he done 'em wrong, too, he done 'em wrong." The girl insisted that the black boys came after them, and she said, "They won't even keep their hands off of us." The blacks all hooted and hollared at that, but all the white girls agreed vigorously. They said it was a point of pride for the blacks to go "Nail a white girl once in a while." But Frank clearly didn't approve of it -- he wanted the blacks to stick with the blacks. "Those are just colored." Mr. H. was trying to keep a rational discussion going and was having a hard time. At one point, when he was trying to make a point over Frank's voice, the big white student said, "Shut up and let him talk." Mr. H. did.

Then they got into the issue of neighborhoods, and who lived where. The white kid asked the black, "Suppose your father wanted to pick up and move into the north side?" And Raymond said, "I don't even live with my father, and if he did that, I wouldn't go with him. I wouldn't live with the whites. You ever come down to our section, to the south side, and you'll get killed."

Then he said, "If I come to a white person in a crowd of blacks, I couldn't do anything for him, I couldn't feel for him, I couldn't touch him." Mr. H. said, "Why?" "Because he's white and I'm for black supremacy." Mr. H. said, "You're prejudiced." Frank said, "No, I'm a revolutionary. There's a difference. I'm not prejudiced against whites, I just want blacks to be on top."

Frank stood up and tried to explain black hatred to whites. "If a black man walks down the street and gets run over by a car, chances are someone will call an ambulence. (The whites agreed.) If a white comes down our neighborhood and gets run over by a car, they'd just go out and bury him in the street." That clearly infuriated the whites. The big white kid said, "I lived in the black section, over on Elizabeth and got along with blacks." Raymond wouldn't admit that such integration even happened, and at the point threatened to go and get a map to prove that whites and blacks never intermingled. He wanted to support Frank's point that they come together because they have to. Once they're out on the streets, it changes. "I live on Elizabeth, you never lived on Elizabeth." And the white kid said, "Yes, I did, I lived over there for the first seven years of my life." Raymond said, "Ain't that sweet?" All the blacks started hooting and hollaring at the white, who was clearly getting the worse end of the arguement. Then Frank got on the issue of who was calling who a nigger, and who was calling who a honkey. He tried to explain that whites and blacks are never really friends. He said, "We get along here, but when we go back to the blacks, we call you honkeys and you call us niggers." The whites denied that, but by this time the big white kid was standing over next to his friend on the left side, and they were whispering about something. Raymond said, "You don't have to whisper, say it out loud. Go on, say it out loud, say it out loud. Did you

call me a nigger?" The kid said, "No, I didn't call you a nigger." Raymond said, "Yes you did, go on, say it out loud." The big white kid was clearly getting red and frustrated. He said, "All right." Raymond said, "You called me a nigger -- don't forget that. I won't forget that either." The other white kid said, "Is that what you're accusing him of, calling you a nigger?" Raymond said, "Yeah, you called me a nigger, too." And the white kid said, "All right, consider yourself called ...." (He didn't say 'nigger.' just said, 'Consider yourself called ....') "Okay, I won't forget that, I won't forget that," Raymond said.

The important points made were that the blacks steer away from, as much as possibly, the white institution. Frank and Raymond were articulating this -- they accommodated because they had to. When they get out, it's different. Also interesting was the fact that the four blacks at the end of the period were standing up and surrounding them were all the whites, including the teacher. The blacks had proven their point -- the whites were together against them,and although Mr. H. tried to keep it reasonable, it wasn't reasonable at all. The whites were continually together in thinking that the blacks were prejudiced, they resented their revolutionary tendencies, they resented being put down. They said, "I didn't enslave anybody. I didn't enslave you." And the blacks equated the former slavery with what the whites were doing to them right now. Their point was, "How come when we talk about Jews we always say that's history. How come when we tell white people what they're doing to us now that's not history, that's what they're doing right now. They're killing us in Louisiana, in Chicago, in Detroit." Another point was that the blacks pushed the white kids into calling them nigger. And they let them know that they thought the whites called them nigger, and they did call

them niggers. And it's true; among themselves they do call them 'niggers', 'spades', and 'coons'.

When the blacks threatened to take over, the whites reaction was predictable: "Yeah, you just try to take over." "You try it." "We will, we will," said Raymond. Then, to Mr. H.'s relief, the bell rang. He had tried to maintain an air of reasonableness, but he couldn't do it -- he just couldn't. Now I could understand more clearly why teachers have to back up from confrontations between the blacks and the whites. The teachers cannot control that type of situation, it gets out of hand so easily. Like that boy telling Mr. H. to shut up -- it wasn't a personal insult to the teacher. It was a problem of race relations, and the teacher was out of his authority position. He'd virtually lost his authority to control the class. What had taken over the class was the animosity between the blacks and the whites. It was articulated most clearly by the blacks. It was also pushed by the blacks. They pushed the whites into saying the things that they said. Raymond pushed those kids into calling him a "nigger." But they are, in fact, already calling them "niggers." Raymond only forced them to do it openly.

The other difficulty is that when the teacher was trying to get the blacks to talk about the play, they didn't even want to do so in an academic manner. The teacher wanted to talk about prejudice as an abstract thing, but to the blacks there is nothing abstract about it. It is so real that as soon as you touch it, it just comes flying out and cannot be controlled. There is no such thing as a reasonable teacher-led discussion of race relations. Maybe the two silent blacks weren't as militant, but they supported Frank and Raymond in their arguements. Racial animosity is such a real thing to those blacks. They've thought about it for so long. I have to say that Frank and

Raymond are much more articulate, much better at making their points than the whites. They had the whites stammering and talking to themselves, although they didn't convince anybody. The only thing Raymond and Frank really convinced the whites of is that they are hated by the blacks.

This is one of a few incidents of this type that I witnessed in the school. Others will be referred to later, but they all point to the fact that while one might blame the school for not fostering interracial harmony, to attempt to do so is not only terribly difficult, but it can be completely disruptive to the normal flow of events.

I went back to Mr. H.'s class the next day and I found him embarrassed about what had happened. He didn't even want to talk about it. The students broke into groups and worked on their parts. One group included two blacks mixed, but Frank, Raymond and Carol stayed by themselves. They too, did their work, but only after a brief and quiet remark about having to "sit with them, them fuckin' honkies ... them white trash." But all -- teacher, blacks and whites, avoided the next step, violence. None seemed to be anxious to increase the tension, and, as a result, it calmed down. Of course, blacks went on interacting with blacks, whites with whites, the classroom was calm, and there were no more open threats of murder. After seeing that, I could better understand why whites and blacks avoided each other and why teachers didn't try to force them together.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

There was one segment of the school which was integrated to some degree and that was the extracurricular sector. In sports the distribution of blacks was like this:

SPORTS

Activity:	Black	White
Baseball, J.V.	2	16
Baseball, Varsity	0	15
Tennis	0	13
Golf	0	12
Swimming	0	9
Football, J.V.	7	23
Track (Cross)	2	6
Track	13	7
Basketball, Varsity	9	1
Basketball, J.W.	7	3
Wrestling	9	8
Basketball (Soph.)	4	4
Football, Varsity	16	16
Cheerleading	3	3
MUSICAL ACTIVITIES		
Marching Band	7	96
Stage Band	1	10
Orchestra	1	32
Madrigal Singers	2	12
Acappella Choir	3	42
Sophomore Chorus	3	6
String Group	1	14
ELECTED OFFICES		
Student Council Officers	2	2
Senior Class	0	4
Junior Class	2	2
Sophomore Class	0	4
MISCELLANEOUS		
NAACP	20	0
National Honor Society	12	60
Quill and Scroll	0	6
Thespians	2	9
German Club	0	18
Ski Club	0	15
Pep Club	10	27

It was fairly obvious that many of the activities were virtually uniracial, a

phenomenon we will explore in the following chapter. However, we consistently observed that when blacks and whites engaged in a demanding activity, such as football or cheerleading, or Student Council leader, as long as that activity lasted, they got along very well. Many of these activities resembled Mrs. I.'s class in that the students were faced with a common demanding task, were quite motivated, and were under the direction of a teacher.

STUDENT PROTESTS

One additional issue: there were two or three students who claimed that the issue in the school was not one of black against white, but of students versus the rigid administration. I doubted this because I simply saw no general student togetherness. For instance, Leslie, a popular junior class officer, said, "There's a lot of snobbery among the kids, but then there's a lot of white trash in this school. A lot of those kids are from the other side of the tracks." I said, "Where's the other side of the tracks?" "Up there by Lowell." I asked her if those kids were pretty tough. She said, "Yeah, they are, like those kids in the auto shop. I don't know many of them. I guess I know one girl who went to Lowell, and I don't know her that well."

But a number of times the complaint of both blacks and whites was not about the other race, but about the rules and the pass system, the lack of a smoking area and the heavy and fast suspensions. Therefore, the question arose, "Could the blacks and whites get together and protest?" We never saw it because it didn't happen when we were there, but there had been an incident the previous year.

Mark told me about it. "There were these two freaky kids walking down the hall holding hands. The principal caught them and says, 'I don't want no signs of affection in this school.' So they stopped holdin' hands and he left, but

he was hiding somewhere because they went around a corner and started holdin' hands again. He came up and suspended them for five days so they got all the kids together." I asked if it had been "all the kids." "No, there were only about 400, only twelve of them were black, the blacks didn't join in. Then we had 400 suspensions, and we all went over to Central office and marched around with signs, they called the national guard and that was the end of it.

The blacks hadn't joined in, and in fact the blacks considered the issue frivilous. They scorned the freaks who held hands and kissed in the halls. Also the blacks had held a demonstration two years previously over the matter of cheerleading squad being all white; Mr. B. told us there was formerly an attempt among the blacks to change things. He remembered one point where they had one black cheerleader, and because all the basketball players were black, they had a sit in. "I was in there, we got in the cafeteria, and we started talking about it. Pretty soon we have sixty kids, then a hundred kids, and then the administration came along and told us we're obstructing a free period and had to move. We went down to my room, over a hundred people in there. That was the only time I became actively involved in the political process." I asked what happened to that political process? "The kids just got turned off." Was it because there really isn't any political process in the school? "Yeah, that's right. There's nothing they can do about it, so they just come to school."

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THREE

In this chapter, it was my intent to answer to the initial exploratory question: "Where and to what extent do blacks and whites interact in this large, urban, biracial, secondary school?" My answer is that while the whites and black students share the same student activities in the same place and in

the immediate company of one another every day, they maintain very definite patterns of non-interaction. That is, they seldom acknowledge or work together directly, and seem to treat each other with a studied avoidance. However it seemed that the school organization made this quite easy. It was routinized so that for almost the entire day, the students were in batches of from 15 to 30 under the care of a single teacher, who was generally expected to use that time to instruct students in the usual way. Students were expected to interact with the teacher not with one another. And also when they are not in the classes, they are either in the halls or the cafeteria, and time given to passing in the halls or eating is kept brief so that one may do what he has to do and go where he has to go and no more.

There were some definite exceptions to the general pattern of non-interaction. In the demanding activities such as sports or cheerleading, and in the highly structured classes geared to the academically motivated students, there was black-white student interaction. It seemed that when the task was demanding and the person in charge maintained control, the racial barriers were put aside for the period of time demanded by the activity. When the activity ended, the blacks went back to interacting with blacks, and the whites with other whites.

It is important to note that color was not the only barrier between students. They were severely divided by social class, neighborhood, age and maturity as well as sex, and of course, we can say that some came to school with the clear intention of graduating into some of our nation's better colleges, others came because they had to, because there was nothing better to do or to obtain a diploma and go into factory work. And between these two extremes, there were probably a hundred of varying motives. Thus, there were a great number

of dividing lines between and among the students at City High. This is what impressed me the most about that school. I kept reflecting on the difficulty of ever obtaining any consensus or cooperativenss among those 1700 + students. And I am suggesting that the behaviors of the teachers and administrators in many cases seem to be geared to that lack of cooperation. The way administrators handled discipline, enforced the pass system, treated the student requests for more power, and the way many teachers behaved in their classrooms seem to me, to be directly related to this lack of unity among the students.

I will return to these ideas in the final chapter, but first would like to discuss the question of unity among blacks and unity among whites.

Chapter IV

WE-NESS AND THEY-NESS

Introduction

In our introductory chapter, there were four exploratory questions, the first of which concerned the nature of the black-white interaction. We attempted to answer that question in Chapter 3 by describing the general non-interaction of blacks and whites, as well as detailing small incidents of their personal interaction in particular situations.

The next two exploratory questions are somewhat more subtle and difficult to answer:

(2) Are there two separate perspectives, one black and one white, in the same school?

And, if so:

(3) What are the salient characteristics of the black student perspective as opposed to the white student perspective?

We defined perspective as a combination of behavior and beliefs that one uses to deal with his environment. What we are looking for, then, is a set of behaviors and beliefs about the school and certain facets of the school environment which black students held in common, as opposed to a set held in common by white students. We will begin by examining a few particular behaviors which are or are not held in common by blacks or whites, but we admit that this cumulative approach, while interesting, is of secondary importance, simply because those behaviors seem to be part of a larger, extra-school black perspective which

is beyond the scope of this study. The main question which we will deal with in this chapter is: "Do either the black or white students in Central perceive themselves to be different from students of the "other" race, and are those perceptions of differences shared by students of that "other" race? The question which grows directly out of this is: Do those perceptions of differences effect the behavior of either black or white students? This is extremely important to understand if we are to deal effectively with the fourth question which will examine the effects of blackness and whiteness on the organization.

First of all, we know that our population of blacks and whites had many things in common. They were all American teenagers, lived in the same city, and many in the same neighborhood; their parents worked in the same factories and businesses; except for the few wealthy students, both groups were from the same social strata, i.e., from poor to middle class, and seemed to share the same aspirations for work, marriage, or higher education. While a few college-bound blacks spoke of going on to Malcolm X, Morgan State or Grambling, and a few whites spoke of going to Brandis or Yesheva, most of either group spoke in terms of Michigan State, Wayne, the University of Michigan, or Eastern Michigan. Selection of college was based more on region than on race. And whether a student was black or white, when speaking of post-high school jobs he talked of one of the three major factories as the place that offered this or that particular wage-benefit package.

Also, the role of student and the daily routine it demanded was the same for blacks and whites. All were expected to be in class, pay attention, do their work, obey the rules, conduct themselves in an orderly fashion, generally take part in the same learning experiences, and, in truth, we found little reason to believe that members of one race were more adept at this than members

of the other race. As indicated by the figures given on student suspensions, the blacks were suspended only slightly more than whites, and while we did not test for significance, we found no discernable reason to believe that one race was better or worse in its members' ability to adjust to the role of student. And as for the matter of group structure, we found that the black students in general were subdivided into small groups and centered their group interaction around common interests and activities just as did the white students.

There were, however, some definite differences. As stated earlier, there were not many blacks in the very top classes, i.e., mythology, advanced math; and in the black studies classes, i.e., Black Literature and Harlem Renaissance, only one or two whites were enrolled. It also seemed that there were proportionally more blacks in the very poorest classes, such as Foundations of Math. We attribute this to the fact that many blacks are poor and since poor people do worse in school, this did not come as any surprise. It is no secret that our educational system reflects our social economic system, and I would add that when I watched those poorer classes, it seemed to be the black students, particularly the girls, who were the most eager to do the work the teacher assigned.

BLACK ENGLISH & OTHER CUSTOMS

There is one difference that I consider essential and that is the English used by blacks was different from the English used by whites. When I began writing this report I would have been reluctant to say that for fear of sounding 'racist", but there is linguistic evidence that substantiates my findings.

Mr. J. L. Dillard[1] demonstrates that the English spoken by blacks in America structurally resembles that West African and Caribbean Pidgin English and is in many ways structurally different from what is known as standard English.

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1. Dillard, J.L., Black English - Its History, Usage in the United States, Random House, New York, 1972.

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want a casual verbal excuse to interrupt the class. We might call that insolence. Or even when Mr. B. was lecturing, I saw his students get up, walk to the front of the room, cross in front of him, sharpen a pencil, and walk back to their seats. Now, some white teachers -- again, I am not excluding myself -- might call that insolent behavior, but the black teacher in that black class did not regard it that way. I am not implying that white teachers had more trouble with blacks than with whites, they didn't. I am only saying that I saw blacks do things that I do not think would be acceptable in either lower or middle class white society.

There were some other differences. The blacks danced differently. They admitted it; whites admitted it, and the dances at the school, when they did occur, were not attended by whites. There was no disagreement on this point between either group. As Leslie said: "The idea of the dance was to get black and white kids together... Well, it wasn't stated, but we had signs around the school with a black and a white fist together. And at the dance it just didn't work. The black kids came, they stayed in the middle of the floor and danced; white kids came, they stood around the edge and watched. There was a group of girls who wanted to get things together ... so we went out and said we wanted to learn how to do their dances and asked the black guys to teach us. They did, but the other kids just stood around, didn't do anything."

The blacks openly ridiculed white dancing. A black organization was putting on a dance at the local community college and Mr. B. asked if there would be any whites there. "Shit, no." Mr. B. said, "Why not?" "Because they're scared." "They can't dance to our music." "What if I brought a white girl," he asked. "We'd probably run you out." Someone else said, "No, it would be all right, but they wouldn't come. They don't like to be around a lot of niggers."

Paul spoke up: "Hey man, you ever watch that Dick Clark Show? It comes on the same time as Soul Train. During the commercials I switch over and laugh my ass off. They do this." Paul then imitated the white dances on the Dick Clark Show and the class laughed loudly at the spectacle. Of course, that meant that no dance would attract both groups. I asked Larry, the white vice president of the senior class how they raised money. "Well, we have dances ... But nobody comes, just the blacks."

Another thing we found was that blacks "panned" or traded mocking insults with each other endlessly. Not all did this, of course. Only the more quick witted students, but white students didn't do this, or they might have done it, but unlike the whites, the blacks did it in large groups and took great pleasure in it.

In this regard the black students were often merciless to each other. It appears there is no place for mediocrity and when a black student was involved in any activity, such as athletics, dramatics, music concerts, etc., his performance had to be exceptional or he was chastized when he returned to the group.

Allen, a second string member of the basketball team, quit. "Man, I couldn't take it anymore. They (other blacks) really get on your ass if you sit the bench." Another example took place in the cafeteria. Three girls sang in the talent show and although I didn't think they were that bad, the group at the table ridiculed their efforts unmercifully until the students around were all laughing and making fun of them. The three sat, obviously seething but said nothing.

There were a few other things. A number of blacks seem to regard the whites as being more affluent. Derrick was talking about this one day.

> "If a white boy cracks up his car, his daddy says, 'Well, I'll call the insurance company tomorrow, so don't worry about it.' But, if a black cracks up his car, he goes home and his father will say, 'Well,

> you better get a job because I'm not going to pay for it, you did it and you're going to pay for it.'"

The other blacks at the table nodded agreement.

There were probably as many misunderstandings among blacks regarding whites as there were among whites regarding blacks. In fact, blacks frequently asked us questions about white society in general:

"Do whites pan each other?" "Do all whites hate blacks?" "What do whites think of us?" "Are they afraid of us?"

And, although Dick got along very well with many black students, some of those same students would ask him questions about the Klu Klux Klan, questions that only an inside Klansman would know. They seemed to assume that any white, even if not a member, is at least knowledgeable about the inner workings of the Klan, which was reported to be active in Michigan at the time.

In sum, while the black students and the white students had many general things in common, there were some decided differences. But trying to itemize and quantify the differences between blacks and whites was not the intent of this study, nor is it the way to get at the perspective. First of all, in this type of study, those quantified differences are based on too small a population to have any generalized value. Secondly, the perspective can be better expressed not in quantative but in qualitative form. That is, we are going to investigate the qualifying differences that the blacks felt about themselves. The main issue of perspective is: Do either blacks or whites perceive themselves to be different from members of the other race?" And since this did seem to happen, my task in this chapter is to demonstrate to what degree it happened and what effect it had on the school. Rather than itemize the differences, I will devote my attention to the issue and consequences of the perceived blackness as opposed to perceived whiteness among the students. At first Dick and I, as whites from the outside, could simply observe the non-interaction and say,

"Yes, there are two perspectives," but since we knew reality is never that simple, we made every effort to learn more about the blacks. And, as we did, it became more and more evident that what appears at first glance as a "black togetherness" was a very loose set of perceptions about some seemingly shifting issues. But in truth, the longer the study went on the more variable and complicated these issues became.

BLACK STUDENTS AND THE STAFF

We might begin by looking at an important and confusing issue, that of the relationships between black students and staff. The black Deputy Principal was a good one to ask about this. He supported our perception of little interaction. "Blacks and whites come together for the business of getting something done and do it. As soon as they leave there's no interaction at all... It has been that way since I came here." He had been at Central for six years and his prime concern was administrative -- that is, maintaining a smooth-running school. He supported the pass system and the no-smoking rule. "You know, as long as we don't allow smoking they won't be taking the hard stuff. Over at Northern they had a smoking area where they let kids smoke. Pretty soon they were smoking more than just tobacco, they were smoking marijuana and coming back into school and causing trouble. You know, if they drink a little wine and then come back and play the fool, they say, 'Well, that's because I had the wine,' but as long as we don't allow smoking, they won't get that way."

I asked him about how black students felt about him. "Well, I'm an administrator and I suppose they see me as a devil, as someone who has power over their lives and someone who is in authority. But pretty much they treat me as an administrator. When I first came here I tried to get some blacks and whites together, but I was so rebuffed, even by my own people, that I stopped trying."

Mr. E. received a high degree of hostility from militant black students, more than did other administrators. In reference to a black-white fight, Herbie said, "Then that incident on the third floor. You know who broke it up? Yeah, L. and Mr. E." Then ... "You know what E. did to me? I was down in the cafeteria eating my lunch -- I don't eat none of that garbage, I just eat my milk and pie, that's all. I was sitting there and there was a tray next to me, and he came along and told me to pick up the tray. I don't pay no attention, I just keep on eating. Then he stick his face in mine, say pick up the tray. I said, "Look, man, keep your face out of my meal. I paid for my meal, and I'm going to sit here and eat it." He says, 'Pick up the tray or get three days suspension.' I said, 'bull-shit', and then he grabbed me. I got thrown out for three days, but I got back in the next day."

"My mother came over to the school and said, 'Was that Herbie's tray? Did you see Herbie eating off of that tray? Did you see him buy that tray?" They said, "No," and I was back in school."

John, another militant black and a good friend of Herbie's, put it much the same way. "E. was really tight with the black kids and tried to be black, but then he's kissing the white man's butt all the time; you can't be kissing the white man's butt and be together with blacks at the same time -- just can't do it."

Mr. E. did have a hard time explaining the "system"to angry Blacks. Once, he and Stan, an able and articulate Black, were having an exchange in the cafeteria. Stan came back to the table: "Man, he's drug. He doesn't know what the fuck he's talking about. He gave me that shit about Jackie Robinson. That was a hundred years ago, we're not Jackie Robinson.

Whether the black students liked or disliked a particular black staff

member seemed to depend on the staff member. Mrs. C. a hall attendant, was very popular with a large number of black boys, but admitted that even she had been accused. She laughed: "They call me everything... Call me 'Tom,' call me this and that, but I hang right in there.

Herbie and the other militant blacks were also resentful of a black hall attendant, L... He was trying to convince the black studies class that the best thing they could do about Lacey was to isolate him, because if they didn't talk to him, then he wouldn't know anything about them. "Lacey was hired to keep us in line, but if he don't know anything about us, then he can't keep us in line." He told me he was trying to get those kids not to talk to Lacey. I told Herbie I saw Lacey favor black students. "He did, huh? Well, I never saw anything like that. He's always hauling black kids in."

The most popular black staff member, Mr. B. was in sympathy with the position of black disciplinarian. "It's a difficult position to be in and I find that black administrators usually end up being administrators instead of black. They make their choice and go with the administration. That must be what they have to do."

But Mr. B. had some strong opinions on the way black students were treated by white staff members. "There's a definite lack of understanding on the part of the whites. Like this morning. We're putting on "Raisin in the Sun' for Human Relations Day. I was taking my class up to the auditorium. There was a white teacher there. I was at the back of the line and I didn't see what happened, but all of the sudden this white teacher called one of the black kids over. I didn't pay any attention. The black kid just kept on going. I said, 'James, go back and see what the man wants.' He went back and I didn't know what had happened until the end of the period. Then I found out that the teacher

had sent the kid to the office. I went up to find out why, and apparently he said that the kid had given him a dirty look. Can you believe that? Another time in this hall here, where we're standing, there were a lot of kids running around, and this white teacher next door came out in the hall and started yelling at a black kid. I walked out in the hall, and when I came out, he started yelling all the louder. Pretty soon he was grabbing the kid. Now you just don't do that. Everybody knows you're not supposed to grab kids. You're just making yourself trouble. If you provoke a confrontation with a kid, somebody has to lose. The kid doesn't want to lose, he's in front of his peers. You don't want to lose, you're just setting an impossible thing up there. (He paused.) I remember a teacher who was in the school three months, came up to me and said, 'You know, I've never dealt with black people before. I've been here three months and I don't even know what they're saying.'"

Talking about himself, Mr. B. said he thought he should fight more and get involved more, go to bat for the blacks more. "I did a couple of times. I went up to the principals office and we had some conversations about how the black kids were getting screwed. Pretty soon it would be just a conversation and nothing was changed. If you want to go to bat for those kids, if you're going to side with the students in this school, you've got to be ready to fight, to punch all the time. You can't pick one issue and go on and strike out, and give up. You've got to keep going all the time. And you'd better be prepared to lose your job. We've had teachers here who sided with students, but they haven't lasted. I asked, "Is the school really run for black kids," and he said, "No, not at all. You know Herbie? If Herbie moves just that much out of line, they're going to throw him out of school. They've got so much stuff piled on him. He's got to walk that chalk line every day. Like Herbie's

brother a few years ago -- that kid couldn't walk around the corner without a flack vest on, they were always shooting at him. They had that kid almost thrown out of school they worked so hard. Now you take that kid, he's in his second year at Wisconsin State, he's the most valuable player on the basketball team, an all-around good kid. When he was here those teachers just hated him."

Of the few other black teachers, Mr. B. said they were either "born in or have assumed middle class values. They want these kids to pull themselves up by their boot straps ... Trouble is that they don't realize those kids don't have any boots."

The matter of how the white teachers regarded black students was difficult. Many, such as Mr. P. seemed to go out of their way to be open and friendly with them, but there was some dismay among white teachers over the fact that it was hard to get blacks involved and participating in activities.

Mr. I., who ran the Honor Society Club, said the Club had "eighty to ninety members, twelve black." Referring to the general difficulty of getting "your coloreds to take an interest," he said, "I don't know why they don't participate more."

The music teacher was quite upset about black attitudes. "I suppose I shouldn't say this, I don't want you to take it wrong. But I found the black kids totally irresponsible and undependable. For instance we were putting on a production two years ago and at that time we had a lot of trouble in school, the blacks were having a lot of boycotts. They boycotted our production after we had sunk a thousand dollars into the production, music, costumes, and props, then they decided they wanted to participate. We got the word from the administration -- we got an ultimatum -- that if we couldn't get some blacks into the program, we couldn't put the program on. They would just as soon have

dropped the whole program and lost a thousand dollars rather than not have black kids in it. So, we decided to double cast the program and get some blacks. We had tryouts all over again and had six blacks participating. By the time we actually put the program on, there were only two left. They wouldn't come to practice, they wouldn't learn their parts. We had one boy -- in the lead, excellent boy, very talented musician -- and he came to me a week before and told me that he couldn't learn his part, that he couldn't be in the play. I convinced him to stay in the chorus, but that's all he would do. The rest just simply dropped out." I agreed with him that that was probably true, and told him I thought it was probably because of the black consciousness. He agreed with that: "They (the other blacks) just won't let them participate. They catch it from each other, you know."

He spoke of another black girl, ... "a very talented girl, probably the most talented girl I had ever had, but I couldn't get her to participate in the program, couldn't get her to sing solos, couldn't get her to take part and couldn't get her to come to practice. I don't know what to do about it."

Then we talked a little about classrooms, and I told him that I thought blacks and whites got along well in the more academic classes. He said, "Yes, that's true in my music theory class. I've got some blacks in there and they get along. But in my sophomore class, it's just polarized and I can't get anywhere. I can't do anything with them." He added that he had had trouble with blacks. "I had five or six real nasty girls in that class and you know they ended up in the Student Council. That's why I've stopped supporting the Student Council. I'm giving my allegiance to the National Honor Society, they get more done."

It may have been that some of the white teachers were reluctant to discipline blacks in class. I watched four or five black students fool around in math for half an hour one day while the teacher tried hard to get on with the algebra lesson. After a lunch break we went back in the room and he called, Mike, one of the blacks out in the hall and confronted him with the note that they had been passing. I couldn't hear it but the teacher's voice was interrupted. "BULL SHIT," said Mike, and stormed back into the room. "HURRRRRRRRUH," he fumed, and sat down. The teacher walked in slightly reddened and began anew.

Some blacks accused white teachers of a form of racism, but this was limited and other blacks, even very militant blacks, felt that the white teachers were very fair. I asked Ray if teachers discriminated against blacks. "Yes, they do. That's why I'm so careful. They'd like to throw you out, they'd like to see you flunk. That's why I'm so careful in class. We've got this one class, six of us in there -- we try to ask questions and get discussions going. We ask him about the black issues, and the teacher won't even discuss it. He'll call on some white girl and the girl will take up the period talking about something she wants to talk about. She won't talk about the black issues. And it's supposed to be a discussion class too. Current affairs."

On the other hand, John, a particularly popular and militant black put it the other way. He said that, "The white teachers like black kids and the black kids like white teachers." His three black friends nodded their agreement. But, of course, this, like everything else, depended on which white teacher.

In reference to a white teacher who had hit a black boy, John said, "Should have killed him for that -- shouldn't let him do that." Five of us were in the cafeteria at that time and a few minutes later the teacher in question came by. Not one of the four blacks even looked at him, although he nodded to our group.

In all, we could find no common feeling among black students of either

black or white staff members. The matter of how black teachers were received by blacks or whites was much the same -- it depended on individuals. But the black teachers in that building were all well liked and respected.

The great majority of students in Auto Shop were white, and, according to Herbie, his shop class was "Where the Klan hangs out." But the teacher, Mr. F. was black, and certainly as far as I could see, was well liked by his students.

We will return to this issue of black and white teachers again, but my conclusion is that there simply was not a common perspective among black students of staff, black or white. The more militant blacks disliked Mr. E. and Mr. L., but other blacks did not. Ray felt that white teachers were prejudiced, but John did not. Mr. B., felt that the white teachers misunderstood blacks, but the black students, even in their most militant moments, could pick out only one particular white teacher for censure, and that was based only on one incident. While I sat in many classes I didn't ever find black students treated with anything less than normal respect by white teachers.

The only time I ever saw white teachers treated with open disdain by black students was when Mr. B. was sick for a week and a series of white substitutes, none of whom lasted more than a day, took over his classes and attempted to impose some structure. All the students in the class were black which, according to Herbie, was as it should be. I asked him why more whites weren't there: "Shit, they'd get killed. Mark's been threatened a lot of times."

Once there was a young white man as substitute. When the students, all of whom were black, started coming in, he started right off telling them to read a story by Langston Hughes. "Ahh, we read that, we read that. We did that." "Let's have our group discussion. We didn't have it on Friday." The substitute asked: "What's a group discussion?" "Well, that's when we sit around and talk about things." Now when I say, "they" there were only a few students who said this. Some of the other students were engaged in their own interactions; one

girl was reading Till Death Do Us Part, by John Gunther; two other girls were talking; four boys were milling around; and some students were still entering. But the teacher agreed to the "discussion," so the students put their chairs in a circle and their books aside. The first thing the substitute said was, "What do you want to talk about?" Well, what they wanted him to do was just be quiet, but he didn't. He felt he had to take the didactic approach and be the teacher. But they would have none of that. As soon as they got in a circle, Derrick started in on a race relations and what was wrong with the world. The substitute, of course, wanted to be the center, so he would try to take Derrick's comments and structure them, but that isn't the way it works. Derrick wanted to talk -- not listen, and the teacher did not understand. So Derrick would start yelling and others would start yelling right back at him, neither seeming to listen. But that's the way the students conducted their discussions, it's not like a one-to-one white, adult conversation. If one watches it long enough, he begins to understand that it makes sense and has its own order, but the teacher didn't understand. He kept trying to get them to talk in firm, well-modulated tones, one at a time -- like he was probably taught to do. He tried everything. "Would any of you like to hear what I did Friday night?" The students were reasonably quiet for a minute. "I went down to U of M where they had a rally for John Sinclair, the man who was arrested for ten years on the charge of possession of two marijuana cigarettes." One student said, "Is he black or white?" The teacher replied, "He's white." "Well, so much for him," yelled Mike, and they went on. "But Bobby Seale was there." At that everybody cheered and pointed to the poster on the wall in which Bobby Seale is standing in the background. Then they hauled out a poster of Eldridge Cleaver and one girl put that up in front of her face. The teacher then started talk-

ing about what Seale said, during which, for two or three minutes, the students were reasonably quiet, but they were getting more out of hand all the time. Then Berlin came in. He came around to the teacher, handed the teacher a slip, and said, "I got thrown out of school." And the teacher said, in an effort to be friendly, "I don't care." And Berlin, in a very condescending, slow voice, said, "Look, I got thrown out last Friday and now I'm back and you have to sign this." He did it the way one would talk to a child. The teacher signed the pass. Then he turned, and tried to continue telling them about Friday night, but by this time their interest was gone, and Derrick began to berate the boys in Phi Psi asking them "What does Phi Psi mean?" And the boy said, "Shh, shhh, shh," and finally the boy got everyone's attention so that he could tell them that Phi Psi was to get black kids together and do something for black people. Then Derrick yelled, "WELL, IF IT IS A BLACK ORGANIZATION, HOW COME YOU GOT A GREEK NAME?" To which the boy replied, "Well, you're black, how come you got the name Derrick, thats a French name." "My name doesn't have anything to do with what's inside me." "Well, all our fraternities have Greek names, that doesn't mean that they have anything to do with what's inside us." As soon as someone would say something, everyone would go "OHHHHHH," "Yeahhhh," hoot and holler and yell at one another. This went on for two or three minutes. Derrick would not give it up, though. Raymond, whenever the yelling would become loud and confused, would jump up, get in the center of the room, do a little hi-life step, collect the thrown pennies, and then sit down. They started "panning" one another's mothers. One boy asked the teacher, "Do you know what his mother did?" The teacher was completely bewildered, "No." "His mother steals carburators out of busses." Or, "You know that truck that turned over? Well, his mother turned it over." Then

everyone would scream and yell. This went on and on. At one point the teacher became so upset he kept yelling, "QUIEEEEEEETTTTT! QUIEEEEEETTTTT!!" One boy looked at him and said, "Don't you yell at us." The teacher said, "Oh, I'm sorry. But I don't know how to get you to be quiet." The boy said, "It doesn't matter, this is what we do on discussion days."

Another substitute had no better luck. He tried to keep them in the room until the bell rang and they wanted to go to the pep assembly. Everyone started corwding around the desk asking to be excused. The substitute said, "No, you have to wait, I'm going to take roll." They waited a few seconds, and then said to me, "Ask him, ask him," They wanted me to tell the substitute that they could go, but I just waited. I didn't want to be used. But it didn't matter, the students didn't wait for my answer, just went back to bugging the teacher. He seemed confused; he did understand that he was being put on, but he didn't know how or whom to accuse; some of the kids had legitimate excuses: one played in the band, another played ball, another was in the pep club, but all were saying at the same time, "I'm in the pep club, man, I gotta go, we gotta be there." "Sign this, sign it," but he wouldn't. So they started to go out without passes and he told them, "I'll call roll and give the names to Mr. Turner." They said, "You do that, you just do that," and four then walked out of the room, then two more, then one more, and then there were only six left. He called roll, but the remaining kids made excuses for the absentees, so his threat was wasted.

A third white substitute had an equally difficult time. The students started coming into the class and, after giving her a quick glance, ignored her. Then they started to play cards. There were six of them right in front of me, others were talking and running around, coming in and going out of the room. She attempted to stop the card games and get them to watch a movie on prejudice.

She haggled and they ignored her. She would say, "Come on now, we have to start, put the cards away, stop your card playing." They paid absolutely no attention, but she persisted and finally they went back to their seats and sat down. Then came the movie. It equated prejudice against blacks with prejudice against Jew, Japanese, Catholics, etc. Of course the black students saw no point in that -- to them there is only one kind of prejudice. When the movie was over, she wanted to engage them in a discussion of prejudice, but it went nowhere. The students went back to talking among themselves, running around the room, playing cards, arm wrestling, and doing what they wanted. Referring to her plea to discuss prejudice, Mike said, "Lady, I've known that all my life; I've known it since I was fourteen and now I'm 23." "You're prejudicing me against you right now," the teacher said. "Lady, there's the door; you can leave any time you want to." She then threatened to report the trouble makers to Mr. B. "Yeah, Lady, you do that -- go ahead." They knew he would ignore her report.

She persisted but it did her no good. But those were the only times I ever saw a white teacher treated with disdain and, of course, they were substitutes, not regular teachers. They were not only white, they were intruders into a black class, and it was understandable that their attempt at leadership should have failed as it did.

While we will return to this point later in the final chapter, I think I can legitimately say that there was no common perception among black students of white or black staff members. The opinions varied depending on the individual.

BLACK TOGETHERNESS

The next and certainly most interesting question is that of the black

togetherness. We had seen that in the cafeteria, corridors and classrooms that there certainly was a black "togetherness" but then we wanted to find out how deeply it went. We had seen some examples of it in the way the students in Mr. B.'s class would spontaneously break into a common activity, when he was late. One day, Wiggles, a nineteen year old student took over. Everyone was watching while Wiggles, was bouncing around the room singing and dancing. As he would approach a student he would call out a stage personality's name to be associated with the respective student. The students in the room were jumping up and down, yelling and laughing loudly as Wiggles would call out each name. "Diana Ross," Wiggles would say pointing to a young lady, and the class would scream and slap hands. Some of the reasons for the associations were evident, others were not, but the class seemed to understand completely. Wiggles approached Sheila and said, "Angela Davis." Sheila gave the power sign and others yelled, "Right on." He danced over to Dick, pointed and said, "Michael Landon," and the class yelled again. Mr. B. now arrived and took a seat and enjoyed the show with his students.

Another time when he left the room the students in unison decided they would play "The Dating Game." They had everything down perfectly, right down to humming the music at the appropriate time with everyone actively participating. When anyone would do anything unique the class would react with great hilarity, and many of the students would react with the slapping handshake. This handshake is where one student holds his hands palms up, while the other slaps them and the the procedure is reversed. In the "Dating Game" there were four participants and a master of ceremonies, and almost everyone in the class was involved except for the few white students, who didn't seem to be paying much

attention, and who weren't asked to participate. These black classes were the only ones in which we ever witnessed this mutual togetherness among the students. (In the other classes, where most students were white and if the teacher was not there the class would break into groups of two or three, or the various individuals would study or sleep.)

And, in the Friday discussions in Mr. B.'s class, the topic of black togetherness always evoked interest. There were a number of very sensitive conversations on this topic in which individuals would admit to their own particular brand of prejudice against other blacks: "Like you know Roosevelt .. they used to call him 'little black sambo' ... he was really a black boon, a black nigger, and we all thought that was bad ... and all the kids used to laugh at him. But then I got to know Roosevelt pretty well and he was cool, he had it together ..." and others took up the conversation and admitted that now they understood that "whites made us ashamed of ourselves."

Some of the girls recalled that they knew women who would say that they wanted to marry a lighter man and have lighter babies. Michelle, a particularly light skinned girl, started to say something and then hesitated ... "Come on Michelle, what do you have to say?" Michelle admitted that she "look down on my brothers and sisters because I was lighter" and went on to tell how she had been "the most esteemed member of my family because of my lightness." While she talked the rest listened and nodded and seemed to understand that this was a hard thing for Michelle to admit. There was no mistaking their togetherness on this issue. They all understood the problems of being black in a white society.

Another form of togetherness which we consistently witnessed was that blacks consistently took pains to make sure that the other blacks did not

interact with whites. In this regard an interesting thing happened to Herbie, who was proud of his status among blacks. "There's only four guys -- I'm going to tell you the truth -- there are only four guys -- me, Tony, Alexander, Derrick, my brother and Frank, we're the only guys who could organize the black in this school." But Herbie, who claimed, "I don't have any white friends -- I never had any --" was quite embarrassed on Friday in Mr. B.'s class when he was caught in the usual discussion on black consciousness.

Herbie, who loved to play in his band, was, as usual, expounding on his hatred of whites, and Mark, the one white student in the class asked: "If you hate whites so much, Herbie, how come you play with me?" Herbie's friend, Frank, jumped on that. "Yeah, Herbie," he said, 'I hate Mark, but I have to go to school with him, sit next to him, smile at him. But when I go home, I don't want to see him." Then to the rest of the class: "I told Herbie that, that I didn't want to see him (Mark), and Herbie agreed, 'Well, I hate him, too.' But how come you playin' with him?"

After some discussion of this, Mr. B. summed it up. "Herbie's group is his soul, the only thing he cares about -- he wants to be the best bass player in the world. The closest thing to him is his music. The question is, 'Should you let a man you hate -- Mark -- should you let a white that you hate, into this world next to your soul?'" It was a bad period for Herbie, with that question being the discussion issue, but he did what he had to do. He stopped playing with Mark.

In reference to that day, Mark said, "Yeah, I was getting it. I thought I was going to have to quit that day, I should have kept my mouth shut." "What did you say?" "Oh, about the band. I said Herbie played with me and apparently I told on Herbie because the other kids didn't know he played with me. So Frank got on him, and said he didn't want any whites. I called the next day

and asked if he wanted to jam and he said no. Monday, the same thing. I called and said, 'Do you want to jam?' -- and he said 'No.' He said 'You know what you did to me?' I said, 'No, what?' He said, 'You made me look like a fool in front of my friends.'" Herbie later said quietly: "Mark shouldn't have done what he did to me in there."

When it became known that a black was associating with whites the other blacks would try to force him to stop. Even Mr. B. said Herbie only threw Mark out because of black pressure. "He had to do that. Mark put him on the spot. Herbie doesn't behave as though he hates whites all the time." In reference to Frank and Herbie who talked of hating all whites: "They say a lot of things, but they don't behave that way."

In reference to a particular black cheerleader who was going out with the white quarterback: "And Marie, you know Marie? She was getting a lot of panning from the kids because she was talking to Randy ... I don't know if she stopped or not, but she was getting a lot of panning. And George, the kids came down hard on him for diggin' white girls." Most blacks, male and female, resented inter-racial dating. When Allen watches a white girl go by in the cafeteria, he is told by his girl friend to "quit looking at that no-ass mother-fucker!"

I wanted to know if it was a case of individual blacks hating whites or did blacks avoid them because of black pressure, so I asked Mr. B. if black students hated white students. "Not really ... Some of the kids feel guilty because they get along with the whites. Either they see themselves put down or they see one of their friends get hurt, or they know that blacks are being oppressed and they feel they should hate whites and they get along with them instead. That causes guilt. You get some of that guilt coming out. They

feel they shouldn't get along with whites at all." That seemed accurate because regardless of how often blacks said they hated whites, they rarely displayed direct hostility toward a particular white.

One time, in the beginning of Black Studies class, William asked a girl:

"You hate whites?"

"Yes, I hate whites."

"There, see that white girl? Go slap her face."

"No."

"Why not? You hates whites, don't you?"

"Yes, but I don't hate her, I just hate the white race and what they've done to blacks."

That seemed to be a good statement of blacks' attitudes toward individual whites. Even William, an avowed white-hater, after asking Dick: "We want to know what you're doing here," later told us that we were "Okay" and could continue coming to the black classes.

Important black athletes were regarded with mixed feelings by blacks. Mr. B. mentioned that the only black-white communication took place between black "celebrities" (top athletes) and whites. "You know Vic, you know George, you know Ray ... Kids like that will have some interaction with whites. That is, whites will seek them out to some degree. The other black kids just never got touched." I asked Herbie about black leaders and specifically mentioned George, a top wrestler-football player and junior class president. At that, he turned around in disgust and wouldn't even talk to me.

Later we discussed the possibility of black protest. Herbie said, "We could protest, but you know what them people do? They send the white girl lovers down to find out what we're doing. They send those guys down to find

out what the niggers are doing." I said, "Who are the white girl lovers?" He said, "George and those guys. They don't mean anything to the blacks. They're just an athlete and they get things out of the school."

On the other hand, that George had a reputation for exploiting white girls was a source of increased pride to the equally militant Raymond, who had exclaimed in the drama class: "And he done 'em wrong, too; he done 'em wrong."

Leslie, an avowed white liberal, and a popular active girl, was quite articulate about the blacks and whites dating. "There are a lot of black guys who go with white girls, but they don't say things about it around school. But you see them outside of school. Sometimes, like, we know a couple of black guys that we hang around with. So they'll pick us up at night, or we'll pick them up. We'll ride around, go down to Cupies. But where can you go? There's just nowhere." She said a lot of students would like to get together with the blacks and the whites, but it's just the stigma against it from their own friends. "They aren't afraid to mix with the races, but they're afraid of what their friends will say." She was particularly resentful of Barbara nad her separatist attitude.

> You know Vic? Well, Vic and I got to know each other and we started going out, but the pressure on Vic was too much and we couldn't make it. These other girls, like Barbara, wouldn't let a black guy go out with a white girl. You come into our Chemistry room and you'll see Barbara and her own little group sitting back there -- they don't talk to anyone.

Leslie didn't believe in separation, but wanted integration. She was mad about the pressure the blacks put on the other blacks not to integrate. Then she said "I'll go farther than those kids. I'll go to school and I'll try to get ahead. And in a few years, you watch, the white kids will be a lot farther ahead than the black kids. There'll be a lot more white kids going

to college than there'll be black kids. No matter what Barbara and her friends say."

Leslie was one of the two or three whites who remembered when blacks and whites were more together. "In junior high, a lot of black and white kids were together ... and when my sisters were here a few years ago, there were a lot of salt and pepper parties. But I haven't seen any." This matter of whether whites and blacks got along better when they were in junior high school was a matter of dispute. Leslie claimed they did, but Herbie said, "I never had any white friends," and John added, "We never were together, not in elementary school, not in junior high, and not here."

This issue of black boys and white girls was quite sensitive, and even Frank, Herbie's good friend, wasn't safe from being accused. When the blacks were trying to form a union, John leaned over and told me in reference to Frank: "Shit, some of these guys that's yellin' the loudest ... they're diggin' a white girl on the side."

This issue of a black "diggin' a white girl on the side" was interesting. Occasionally we saw it in a classroom. A black boy and white girl were snuggling up to each other in a corner of the art room. He was putting his hands all over her, but when he went below her belt, she would give him a light slap and they would both laugh and back away. Another black boy was watching and said, "Hey, man what ye doin'?" "Mind your business, brother, this young lady's got something I want and I'm going to get it, too."

But, it wasn't common and there were many barriers to it: few whites did it and many blacks were strongly opposed. I suppose girls who would have liked to date blacks were, like Leslie, angry at the taboos.

I remember once there was a white girl in the art room with a white boy on her left and a black boy on her right. She was talking to the white and the black was trying to get in the conversation. When he gained her attention, the white boy turned his back on the two of them.

Up to now I have considered only the issue of black boys and white girls. We heard of only one instance of a white boy and a black girl. Ramona and Mary, told us: "Oh, there was this girl last year, you remember the one -- she went with that white boy, that short white boy, that was the only one I ever saw, and the kids were talking to her and telling her they were going to beat her up and all that, but she didn't stop. I don't know what finally happened to her." Both Mary and Ramona agreed that they "don't see nothin' wrong with it.. If you really love somebody, that's your business and nobody else's." But they added, "We were raised to marry our own kind."

Mark would have liked to date some black girls, but he couldn't. "Because their friends won't let them. I don't care about that kind of thing, but those black kids wouldn't let black girls go out with me."

Barbara was one of the blacks who were most harsh on interracial dating. She particularly disliked it because she felt it contributed to black disunity. She was the student council president and claimed she was able to win because the white vote was split; and she was quite articulate on the matter of black togetherness:

"No, we're not together. I try to unite them, but you can't. I crusade for blackness. We have to unify to understand ourselves. It really hurts me. I want to be like Angela Davis -- she cool."

"But you said all the blacks voted for you. Isn't that together?"

"No, not like we have to be. You should see us when we get together. All we do is fight -- don't give a shit about one another."

"Are there any black students who've got it together?"

"No, I would say Stan is the closest." (Stan was our initial contact person.)

"I heard Frank had it together."

"Shit, he just like the rest. He's diggin' a white girl."

"You mean you can't work for the cause and make it with a white girl?"

"Nope, you've got to sacrifice. How are we ever going to understand ourselves?"

SOME BLACK DISCUSSIONS

One of the most interesting things to watch were the attempts by blacks to increase their unity. We always had access to this because it was the usual topic for discussion in Mr. B.'s Friday classes, Harlem Renaissance and Black Literature, which we always attended.

This was always the big event of the day. Students who were in the third hour Harlem Renaissance would return during the fourth hour to continue a discussion that had become heated. One particular day the issue was Mr. L., a black security guard. "Should the blacks talk to L.? Should we give him the power sign?" Frank didn't think so. He said that L. and E. were "Nothin' but niggers." "L. left Fisher Body to come over here. He didn't have to come here. He was making over $100 a week and he left it to come here and work. And now he thinks he has to haul 35 black kids into the office for every white kid he hauls in there, just to kiss the Principal's ass. And E.'s the same way. They're just niggers."

That aroused a lot of emotion from Mr. B ..... "the trouble with you, Frank, is that you are defining what other people have to do to be black." Others agreed. One of the girls, Reprussia, spoke up and said: "I don't wear my hair in a Fro, I dress the way I want to, but I'm black, and I'm

black because I'm black, not because of what you say I should be, not because of what you say black is." There was some cheering when she finished.

Then Herbie walked in, having left his usual class. The issue became whether some of the most militant and the most vocal are going to continually define what other blacks should do. There were a number of students who felt they were just as black as anybody else and that they didn't need to do what Herbie and Frank said in order to prove it. One of the girls even spoke up and defended Mark's right to be in the class and to associate with blacks, but she was ridiculed for that. Mr. B. continued to defend L., "L.'s got a job and he's got to do his job. If A.'s the boss, and A.'s white, that's not L.'s fault. He's got to have the job." Frank disagreed. "I knew how much he was making over at Fisher Body. There are people who get strung up and die for the cause, and he should give up his job in order to further the cause of black power. He's not furthering black power in this school, he's not favoring the black kids, and he's not even being decent to them." (Which is contrary to what I saw the previous day when he was definitely favoring the black kids over the white kids.) But Herbie got going on the power sign: "When I wear my hair this way and give the power sign, I only gives the power sign to my brothers, not to L. I don't want anybody who isn't 'all black' to go around using the sign." "That's right." "Right on." from a group of four or five boys by the window. A number of girls were disagreeing and the rest of us were watching. Mark, of course, said nothing. Mr. B. became angry -- He might have been transferring it over into his own situation as a black teacher, because if they accuse L. and Mr. E. of doing what the "white man" wants, then they can accuse him also. "Why should everybody else have to live according to what you (Herbie and Frank) say is right?"

Then they began on the basketball players, which was another subject carried over from third hour.

The question in class became, "Why can't black basketball players give the sign?" This was a month old issue involving a racial incident at a basketball game. A black city player had threatened an opposing white player and the blacks had been particularly incensed because, while the City player was blamed, it was claimed that the white player had called him a "nigger." Following the incident, there was a ruling from the central office which, among other things, said that black players were not to raise their fist during the National Anthem. The basketball players stopped giving the "sign" and continued playing, which further angered the militants. At that, Mark, a liberal white, tried to support Frank by asserting his right to sit during the anthem. "I never stand -- I always sit." Someone said, "Ohhh," and Frank said in a mocking tone, "Listen to your momma," everyone laughed and Mark shut up. Herbie went on: "The white man holds his hand over his heart or takes his hat off, right? Well, why can't we salute our way?" I was frankly surprised at that, having never considered the power sign as a means of saluting the stars and stripes.

Then they began to berate Henry, a basketball player, who gave up giving the power sign in order to continue playing. The militants, Herbie, Frank and Dan, said he should have stopped playing basketball, which was "just a white man's game." Some girls defended him: "Well, Henry does it because that's the way he can get a college scholarship." Frank didn't like that: "There are lots of ways to go to college without having to sell out the brothers and sisters to get there." A lot of girls felt that "Hank had the right to play ball if he wanted to. It was his game and he wanted to play it." Mr. B.

thought so too. Again, though, Herbie, Frank and Derrick, agreed that Henry shouldn't play on the team. "Since everything is white, we should seperate ourselves as much as possible and the basketball players aren't doing it." Eugene, a basketball player, tried to defend himself, but he was no match for Herbie, Frank and Derrick.

When class let out that day, I headed up for the third floor library to write it all down, but I didn't make it because something was going on in the halls. There was a group of blacks down at the end of the third floor hall. Black students were going toward that end and whites were heading the other way. There were a lot of calls "Black Power" and "Right on!" One locker was open and then I saw that about thirty blacks had a small white student in the middle. One hit him, knocked something out of his hand and he went flying out from the crowd. When he bent down to pick up his book, Frank kneed him in the left side. Someone else hit him before they let him go and he came down the hall past me, tears in his eyes, a small and chubby boy. They had broken his cello. The Spanish teacher, who was white, was then in the middle telling them to leave, but they were surrounding him. Frank walked around behind, raised his hand over the teacher's head and pointed down, as if to say "Get him." But they didn't do it. They saw L. and Mr. E. coming down the hall, and they broke up.

I went in the library and a black student came in. "Hey, you just missed an incident out in the hall. You could have put that in your book." I told him I had seen it. "Are you going to put that in your book?" he asked.

I went down to find out what happened and outside of the office the Administrative Assistant was bringing in a few who had been in the crowd. Frank was among them. I asked L. what happened and he minimized it. "I don't know, some little kid came to me crying, said he got beat up. So I went to see what hap-

pened." I asked him if he had pulled anyone into the office. He said, "Well, I didn't put the collar on anybody right there." Then he told me quietly that he knew Frank was in fact, L's brother-in-law, and that "Frank's momma told me to watch Frank and make sure he didn't get into any trouble."

There were a lot of students in the hall, excited, knowing something was up, and Reprussia and Mike, two of Dick's black friends, were leaning against the wall talking to him -- so I stopped and we talked about the whole issue. Mike and Reprussia were pretty disgusted about what had happened in the hall and in class. According to Mike, "There's no black solidarity in this school." "Black kids just aren't together." I told him that it looked like they were together to whites. He scoffed at that. "You know, I can go down this hall right now and I can get 25 guys to gang up on a white. But if I'm in the john getting my ass kicked in, they'd come up and say, 'Are you all right, do you need any help,' or 'I was going to help you.' But the blacks aren't together at all. There'll be no trouble. People talk about tensions in City Central. There aren't any tensions in Central. The blacks just aren't together, they've got nothing going on. Not like Southwestern and Northern." Reprussia agreed: "There's always a lot of back biting going on among blacks ... You come to school and they're always putting everybody down, within the blacks." She talked about the way she dresses with no "Fro," she doesn't dress 'down," as she put it. "But when I come to school people accuse me of thinking I'm better than they are, the other blacks, and so I don't have any friends. I've been in the school five years, and I don't have friend." On the business of dating white guys, she said, "They're always after Mark." Mark apparently said one time that he'd 'like to go out with some black chicks," and they said, "Who, who?" and Reprussia said, "I knew I was the one. And I

would go out with him if he asked me, even though he's white, because it's him, it's not his color, it's him." Then she walked up to Dick and said, "If you were a little younger, I'd go out with you. I don't care if he's white or black, it's him that I know. It's not his color. And if I want to do that, that's my business, that's personal. And if people say 'What happened on the date,' that's my business, that's between him and me. You want to find out what happened when I went out with him, you go out with him." Then she got after the black girls getting down on black guys for going out with white girls; her point here was that if those guys wanted to go out with white girls, that was their business. The trouble was that the black girls gave them no alternative -- "The black girls really play bad on those guys." She added: "All pussies are the same inside anyhow."

It was getting loud so we went down to the cafeteria, Mike, Reprussia, Dick and I. The eyes really popped when we walked in like that, two blacks and two whites. We sat down. Mike told us about his group. He said he had been with them for four years -- two black guys and two white guys. He said that they had really gotten to know each other, really gotten to be friends. When they go and play somewhere, people walk up and say, "Hmmmm, we've got some blacks in this crowd, won't be any good," or they say, "Hmmmm, we've got some whites in this group, won't be any good." "But after we start playing, they start liking it, and they tell us we're good. They forget the color -- it's the music they listen to." Then Mike said that he doesn't have any friends either. "When I go home, it's my music. I plays from 3:00 in the afternoon till 12:00 at night. But when in school, I just stays quiet, just don't say anything." He's the drum major in the band, and he gets a lot of heat for it. According to Reprussia, "Any black kid who in-

volves himself with anything is going to get heat from guys like Frank and Herbie."

Reprussia considered herself better than many of the blacks. "They're nothing but ignorant." She became quite emotional when talking about the trouble she had with other blacks:

> I'm tired of them telling me who I can talk to. I'm going to talk with and go out with who I want and they can kiss my ass if they don't like it. I can get anything I want, my pussy is the same on the inside. I know what I got to do and I'm gonna get mine. Want me to come dressed like a dude -- I'm dressing like a young lady, fuck them. I'll talk to whom I want.

Dick and Reprussia were quite good friends and he asked: "Did they get on you for talking to me and eating with me?"

> Hell, yeah, I got a lot of hassle about talking to you and eating with you. I want friends, too, I need them like everybody else, but I'm through with that shit.

In reference to militant blacks, Mike added:

> Man, they're crazy. You can't talk to them about what's right and wrong. They're going to start something and I'm gonna get my head busted. They ain't gonna get me out of a jail. They're all phoney, back-biting mother fuckers. Brothers and sisters ... fuck 'em. The only brothers and sisters I got are right at home.

Then they mentioned a kid named Tony, a talented ballet dancer, who is the most disrespected black kid in the school. According to Reprussia, they don't give kids any credit for their individual talent. "They don't give Mike credit, aren't proud of him because he's a drum major; aren't proud of Tony because he's a ballet dancer; they keep calling him 'queer.' They don't allow enough individuality." Mike added, "Black kids who want to be individualists, have a tough time."

"If the blacks were really together, would you join?" I asked. He thought about it. "That's hard. Yeah, I would, I'd join them. But I won't

join them now, because they're not together. If I'm getting my ass kicked by the whites, blacks aren't going to help me at all. These people who yell so much about being my brother and raising the black power sign to me, they're not going to help me at all." Mike and Reprussia had been in Mr. B.'s class and were two good students. Mike, a talented musician, was the only black in the stage band, and one of seven in the marching band. Reprussia worked for Mr. D., was well liked by all the administrators, and had been offered a scholarship to Kalamazoo College. Their perceptions reinforced our feelings that "Black Togetherness" was an illusory thing.

Even Herbie didn't like what Frank had done. Later we talked about that day and he said, "Frank's too quick. Frank always wants to start thumping. Frank wants to start thumping right away -- he don't use his head. He has no idea of organization. He just got all excited that day. He got excited in class, you know? He walked out of class looking for trouble -- Derrick was going to go with him. I said, 'Wait a minute Derrick, how many guys you see going with Frank?' 'About 15.' 'How many guys you see standing back?' 'A whole lot.' 'You see, you've got a handful going up there to make trouble, and a bowlful holding back. Don't go with those guys.' And Derrick, Herbie and the others didn't." As a result, Frank's attempt to foment a large scale incident didn't amount to much.

THE BLACK STUDENT UNION

I personally felt that their general perceptions of non-togetherness were true, particularly after I had witnessed the attempts to form a Black Student Union. The meetings were held in Mr. B.'s room, and I asked him if I could come. He said it was all right with him if it was all right with the students, and apparently it was. They were used to me in their discussions.

There were 28 students there, most of whom I recognized from the black classes. Barb, the initiator of the idea, was absent, so the meeting started with Vickie, her friend, talking about getting the blacks together. It was a little unclear just what they would do after they got together. As she explained it she wanted greater awareness among black students. That's the term she used ... for "the blacks to get together." First of course, were the questions: "Why are we getting together?" "What for?" "What are we going to do?" Mr. B. mentioned studying Swahili, pointing out that "If twenty-five blacks got together and requested a course or a language such as Swahili, then the district would make every effort to provide a teacher for that language."

Robert asked, "What's Swahili?" A few laughed at that, but Derrick took it seriously. "Yeah, what's Swahili?" He was told: "It's a black language." "Well, all they're going to teach is nouns and verbs and say 'Where are you going to dinner?' and 'What time are you going to go?' So what good is that? We can't talk to anybody in Swahili." Mr. B. disagreed. He said, "If kids got together to learn Swahili then they could greet each other, then they'd have a language, a way they could communicate." Vicki agreed, but Derrick kept it up. "What good is Swahili? They're not going to learn anything anyway," and a number of boys nodded in agreement.

The subject changed. Robert said, "What we need is commitment. Why don't we get kids to sign, writing their name down on paper, that would be a sign of togetherness." Then Tony said that "being here is an indication of their togetherness. You don't need to write your name down on a piece of paper." Carl got up and took over. "WHAT DO I WANT TO SIGN A PIECE OF PAPER FOR? WHAT GOOD IS THAT? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?" Others were laughing at him

because of the comical and exaggerated way he said things, but he was serious and articulate. Tony got mad at that -- "There you go, playing the fool Everytime you get a bunch of niggers in a room, somebody got to be the clown."

At this point Vickie and Mr. B. were getting upset because the meeting was falling apart, people talking about this and that, Swahili and signing names on a piece of paper, Carl making jokes, the negative reaction to Carl making jokes. Vickie said, "THERE YOU GO, FITTING THE WHITE STEREOTYPE AGAIN. GOTTA BE GODDAMN NIGGERS." That quieted things a little and then the question passed not to "why" but "how" to get people together.

Henry pointed out that "If you give them something to eat, they'll come to the meeting," and suggested having a barbeque. Carl agreed -- have a party. "Get people to come to get something to eat, and then when you get them to come, tell them about the black union." Vickie thought that was a stereotype - "There you go, putting them together because they're a bunch of niggers. Got to give them something to eat in order to get them together for anything." Tony agreed, but John said: "Dinner's black, man, dinner's black."

Mr. B. sort of took over the meeting at that point because it wasn't going anywhere -- in fact, it was more than half finished. Frank at one point said they ought to get together to fight, "bring their rifles to school," but at another point he said that they had "to get some publicity, run off some posters, advertise the meeting. Call a bigger meeting and advertise it." It was at that point that John remarked about "Frank" diggin' a white girl."

Then it became not what you do -- what they decided to do was call more meetings. Carl kept bringing up the point that it didn't make any sense to

call more meetings because the kids in the hall kept asking the question, "What's this black student union going to do?" and they "aren't going to come until they're told."

Vickie had withdrawn with the discussion of dinners and bringing rifles, and there was a great deal of "What am I going to do?" "Why should I sign my name?" "What is this all about, anyway?" and "Why are we here?" What they then decided to do was just hold a meeting and invite more people, as many as possible. Eugene suggested that since black kids are "divided up into different little groups what we have to do is get a different individual to go to each group and explain the purpose of the meeting to them." Almost everyone agreed that was a good idea, but no one made an attempt to implement it.

It was stated at the meeting also that they kept asking themselves, "What do we do?" The one suggestion was that they walk out of school. But, Mr. B. pointed out what had happened to the students who had tried to walk out last year to get the hand holding issue resolved. "They just threw everybody out of school." He said the administration would do the same thing again.

> You get twenty-five kids and put it around the cafeteria that you are going to walk out or have a rally, and they'll just throw every body out, double the hall monitors, double the national guard, and throw all the kids out. That won't do any good, we can't do anything at all like that. Not until we get at least 300 people supporting us. We've got only twenty-five here.

Vickie got it from the other side, from Derrick too, accusing her of not being that dedicated because she was going to leave the school in two months; that obviously upset her, but she stayed quiet.

They said they would have another meeting on Wednesday and then left. It was pointed out that there were only 28 there, but that was all that could be expected when the meeting is held sixth period and other students have classes.

So, on Wednesday at 3:05 they planned to call a bigger meeting and invite in some kids from the other high schools to explain the black student union process.

When everyone had gone I waited to ask Mr. B. exactly what it was that the black student union wanted to do. Vickie stayed and as soon as everyone had gone she started to cry, and blamed the failure of the meeting on "those kids like Carl who walk in and start playing the fool." The teacher tried to cheer her up, told her that it wasn't her fault, told her that they needed that time to express themselves. They had to try to get things together. She had expected more. She was particularly incensed about the fact that some of the negative comments had been directed at her personally. "You think they could put that thing away just once; there were kids who didn't come or who didn't like the meeting because it was run by me and my friends, and they couldn't put that aside." She was crying and said that maybe she should just leave and not try to organize anymore. He admitted that he had been asked in third period class who was organizing the meeting and when he said Vickie and Barbara, some kids had said, "Oh, well, what can you expect."

There was an interesting thing that Vickie said to Mr. B. She mentioned that she was going to get the kids from Northern and Southwestern, and he said, "How many do they have in the black student union?" She said, "About fifteen." He said, "Oh, I thought it was a big movement over there." She said, "No, it is just a few kids in either school" I was surprised to hear this since the blacks at Central consistently pointed to the other schools as places blacks were "really together."

Wednesday there was a second black student union meeting. There were twenty-three present, many of the same ones from the first meeting. Vickie started off explaining that what they wanted to do was get a goals committee.

There were some questions: "What's the goals committee all about?", and she explained it was a committee to write down what the black students wanted to do together and then the committee would come back to present it to the group for their approval. She wanted ten students on the committee -- five boys and five girls. Many of those who were immediately suggested weren't even there, and there was some resentment on the part of the kids who were present about that. "Well, where are those kids?" "How come they're not here?" "How come it's just that one clique?" Then Frank asked a question: "How come everybody couldn't be on the goals committee?" Vickie pointed out that they just had too many people -- 25 people -- and that they wouldn't be able to get any decisions made.

Derrick was sitting up front as usual, and Sharon brought up the student council. Marie, Sharon and one other person were on the student council. They wanted the goals committee to get together, lay a foundation, and take the organization to the student council for official approval. They wanted the black student union to be like a club that has representation on the council. "You have to get procedures. It has to be according to procedure.", said Sharon. But Derrick derided the idea: "WHAT HAVE THEY DONE FOR US, WHAT HAVE THEY DONE FOR US," he said, screaming. "They represent the school. The student union is the backbone of the whole school." Derrick again repeated: "But what have they done for us?" "Who's on Student Council?" Marie and Vickie and a boy raised their hands and he said, "I KNEW IT, I KNEW IT, I KNEW IT,' obviously because it was the same few blacks who try to be in on all the activities.

Then there was a lot of yelling and screaming, and every once in a while somebody would say, "That's just the way they expect us to act -- you act just

like a bunch of niggers. You're acting just like the black stereotype."

Frank took over. Frank was much better and very cool. He is also a good organizer and quite considerate, people got recognized and included. Frank tried hard and generally succeeded in making people listen. The comments revolved around this whole Student Council business. Why should the black students have to ask the Student Council's permission? Derrick's point was that the Student Council hadn't done anything for the students. But Sharon, on the other hand, would say, "What did you ever ask us to do?" "Well, I wouldn't ask you to do anything. As long as I walk between room 212 and room 222 and keep my hands at my sides, don't push anybody, don't bother anybody, they (the administration) can't do anything to me." In fact, he entirely rejected the whole business that Sharon put forward about the student council acting as a middle man to help them out. He said they didn't "help out at all." He said he "didn't need them."

Then Carl suggested, "We don't have a foundation; that's what we need the goals committee for, to get a foundation." That was generally agreed upon and Derrick wanted to elect officers. Only three students agreed that it was time to elect officers and it didn't happen. The meeting adjourned. Later Barb and Vickie took it to the Council for approval. The Council did approve it, but the Principal, who had veto power in Council decisions, kept it on his desk until the end of the year.

We will refer to this attempt by blacks to unite in the next and final chapter, but one thing was obvious: while they felt some sense of togetherness, stayed together, talked together, and lived together, it was almost impossible for them to assert themselves in some direct action-based way. They simply couldn't decide what action to take or even why they wanted to take it. Nor

could they put aside their in-group antagonisms long enough to pursue some common action. Derrick derided the girls who cheered and ran the Council, even though that group included Barb, an avowed separatist. Barbara derided the most vociferously militant black, Frank, for "diggin' a white girl." And the talented blacks, like Mike, Reprussia and Tony, were severely resentful of other blacks who belittled their efforts as "playing the white man's game."

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

There is one more incident I would like to describe before pursuing this issue.

April 14th was the anniversary of Martin Luther King's death and, as they had done in the previous year, some black students in the NAACP with Mr. L.'s direction were planning a program to honor black people. Herbie was among the militants who scoffed at it. "No, I won't do nothin' on Martin Luther King Day. They don't let us do nothing. Like last year -- we were going to appoint monitors and let them go around the halls and check kids passes. We were going to have a Black Day when we could do our thing -- a black holiday. Like you have Christmas and Easter, right? Thanksgiving? We were going to have Martin Luther King Day, do whatever we wanted to do. But last year, when we had that day, we were having a rap in the gym and the administrators came along and threw us out."

Later, in reference to the day, Mr. B. asked Frank to be a part of a panel discussion that Tony and Herbie had planned. At the mention of Herbie and Tony, a number of students went "Booooo.," and Frank said, "Mr. B., you heard what just happened. When you mentioned Tony and Stone, all these boons go "Booooo," and that's down, they're bad niggers. Why should I get up there and have people say that I'm a trouble maker like those guys? They're going to

say the same thing about me that they said about Malcolm X." Mr. B. tried to argue that and said that he thought that a "lot of people said Malcolm X was bad in his time, but you know where he is now." "Yeah, he's dead and gone," said Frank. Mr. B. said, "Yeah, he's dead and gone, but the point is that a lot of people came around and found out that a lot of the things he said were true." Frank said, "That don't matter, he's still dead and gone, even if people have come to see that he was right." But then he added, "Why can't we have an H. Rap Brown Day, why can't we have a Stokley Carmichael Day, why can't we have Martin L. King Day on Thursday and H. Rap Brown day on Friday? H. Rap Brown did a lot of things for the black people. A lot of people don't even know who H. Rap Brown is, and what he did for them. We should have a day to honor him the same way we have a day to honor Dr. King."

A boy on the other side of the room spoke up: "Why couldn't every day be Martin L. King Day? Why couldn't the black people do things every day instead of just one day a year? You could go to the Principal and he'll say 'No.' Go to him anyway, he'll say no anyway, just as much as any other day." Just as with the black student union, the black students couldn't decide whether they wanted to get together or what they would do even if they did get together. But the day did take place with some planned activities.

It started with the play "Raisin in the Sun" in the auditorium, which holds 700 people, and at least 500 or 600 students were there. Of those five or six hundred, about one hundred were white. Of those one hundred whites, only twenty-five were boys. The rest were girls, and the rest of the students were black. In addition to Mr. B., I saw only one teacher, and that was Mrs. H. who had such difficulty with discipline.

The production by Mr. B.'s second hour class was just terrible. Two girls

got up in front at the beginning and read Langston Hughes's poem, "What Happens to a Dream Deferred," but they read it quickly, incoherently, and nobody understood it. Then the play started and I don't think anyone understood that either because it was almost impossible to hear. Instead of comprehension there was sporadic laughter at various incidents. Somebody would refer to someone else as 'your momma,' and they'd all laugh. Or the one girl was dressed up to appear pregnant, and they laughed at that. When the boy was sleeping on the couch and the mother told him to get up; he got up and stretched, and they all laughed at that. Or when the white man came in and offered to buy out the black family, and the black householder was going to throw him out, they said, "Hit him, Hit him," and they laughed at that. Mr. B. appeared as a character and that too was a hit. So, instead of getting the whole gist of the play, they laughed at various isolated incidents. There were enough of those to keep the audience interested and they enjoyed the play. It ended earlier than expected and the students had to sit for awhile, and wait for the bell, but as usual their behavior was orderly.

As we left the auditorium, Mr. D., on the way down the hall said he was pleased that it had happened. He said he thought the kids were ready for some black humor, and he appreciated it personally and thought the white kids had too. He said, "Five or six years ago you couldn't have had that because whites wouldn't have understood the blacks, but they understood it today, they were ready for it." I thought it was a funny thing to say, given that there were so few white students there.

The next event was the discussion and I told Herbie "You'll be in that." He said, "No, I won't, you wait, you watch, I won't say one word, I won't open my mouth." I told him he was wrong, and, he was.

So we went to the library for an "open discussion of race relations." There were two or three hundred students in the library, only twenty-four of them white, and most of those girls. I noticed that there was a group of girls with whom Leslie hangs around: well-dressed and affluent looking kids. Two of them had tennis rackets.

Right away L. tried to start it off by calling on Mrs .O., a very well-liked teacher who is Chinese-Hawaiian. She started off by saying that she was disturbed because she thought it was Human Relations Day and there was only one race there. "Let's quit talking and start fighting," said the boy sitting next to me, the same one who had punched the white student during the fire drill. At that point, Derrick and Carl got up: "Well, that's not the purpose of the day, to get whites and blacks together. Whites and blacks WILL NEVER GET TOGETHER. THE PURPOSE OF THE DAY IS TO GET BLACKS TOGETHER. THAT'S WHAT WE CAME TO TALK ABOUT. WE CAME TO TALK ABOUT BEING BLACK." Mrs. O. and L. got mad at that. They tried to point out that the purpose of the day was not Black Awareness Day, but Human Relations Day. Carl didn't agree, "Martin Luther King was a good nigger who got shot trying to be a good nigger. What's the sense in trying to be a good nigger with the whites? WHAT WE WANT IS MORE BLACK AWARENESS."

The teacher got angry. "If you want me to, then, I'll leave. If the purpose of this day is black awareness, then I'll leave. I'm not black, so I'll leave." Derrick said, "GO AHEAD, WE AIN'T STOPPING YOU." Then Herbie got up and said, "I came to talk about blackness. If the purpose of this day is just to talk about human relations, I gotta go get a haircut." He put on his hat and walked out, amid a lot of howling and yelling. There were only a few blacks, Herbie, Derrick, Tony and Carl -- and they were yelling about

making a black awareness thing, but they clearly had the crowd with them. Steve was talking about making a revolution. "Let's do something." Barbara, as Council president, was trying to get a dialogue going with Mrs. O., but it's simply impossible to start a dialogue with anyone when Carl, Derrick, Herbie and Tony -- all of whom are sharp witted, articulate and angry -- kept harrassing her. L. got very upset and said that what he was trying to do was "make it human relations day, not just black awareness day." He was trying to shut the boys up, but they were calling him "Tom," and "Mr. Jones."

But he tried: "The NAACP started the day, we started it to try and talk about it, and now you come up here and try to turn it into something else. You're tearing it apart. You're just acting like niggers." Derrick wouldn't take that. He said, "Mr. D., didn't you make me come in this library? Now you made me come in (and Mr. D. nodded), I'm going to make it what I want." Then he said, "If this is human relations day, WHERE ARE THE WHITES?" Derrick was right, the fact is half of the whites weren't even in school that day.

When Derrick said "Where are the whites," one white girl raised her hand. "I want the blacks to stop talking about being black all the time and get to trying to get along with some whites." As soon as she said that, everybody went "Ahhhhooohh," "Booooo," but she went on. "If the blacks withdraw from society, they'll just be cutting themselves off, and if you cut yourself off from whites, as you're doing, then you'll never get back in." At this a lot of them hollered, "Yeah, who wants to get back in?" She tried to make her understand, she was drowned out by the booing. At that the bell rang.

I went to Mr. B.'s class to pursue the events and found that many were quite upset about what had happened in the library. Steve continued to deride

L. but Mr. B. defended him strongly. He said, "L. is not a Tom .... he has no prestige in this school, he has no more prestige than a student, and yet he is continually out on the line trying to do something." "The rest of you people are just sitting back, but you're not doing anything. You're not going up to see A. L. is standing out there -- he's getting shot at by everybody -- teachers, students, administrators. In fact, the administrators wanted to end this thing at the end of second period. They asked L. "Can we call this whole day off," because everyone was sitting in the auditorium when the play was ended, it didn't take as long as they thought it would. He said, "No, I've got these people coming in here," and L. stood up to E." When he told about Mr. E., the Black Deputy Principal, being involved then the students went, "Ohhhh..." But Mr. B. defended him also, saying he "has to play a white administrative role." He went on, "I'm the first one to blame. I'm not doing enough here. L. came to me and asked me about this whole day. He said I just haven't got time. And none of the other black teachers are doing anything for you either. But next week we're going to start -- we're going to have a meeting." The kids asked where. "Right here -- we're going to get all the black teachers in the building." The kids said that there were only a few, and B. said, "It's a start, we've at least got five, and we'll get them together." He was very strong in his support of L., and he had a good point, L. was the only black official or semi-official in the school who was trying to do something for the black kids, although everything he tries to do gets shot down by Herbie, Derrick, Frank and people like that. And, too, the administrators didn't appreciate his efforts: The Principal asked him at the end of the day if he thought relations were any better now. L. was sort of

put on the spot. He said, "it will take a long time." Later he told me, "That's like asking a man in his first day of algebra class if he knows algebra. It's going to take a long time. We should have a human relations day once a week." I'm out there alone -- even the black teachers don't try to help any. I'm out here fighting this by myself. But you've gotta."

Steve was pleading for some revolutions, too. He said, "We should do what the students have done at the other high schools, we should get together. We should start an incident of some kind. We're just dogs on a choke chain, and the white man is holding the end of that choke chain. The people up in the library wanted us to do something for City Central -- we can't do anything for Central -- it doesn't belong to us, we just go here. You try to do something, you take a piece of paper with a lot of names on it up to A., and they tell you that he ain't there. Then they send you to the other guy and he just gives you double talk. We're just like dogs on a choke chain." At that B. said, "Well, Steve, what do you want us to do? Do you want L. and me to get together and help you start a disturbance?" But Steve didn't know what to do. He made a plea for action; the rest of the blacks sat and watched him, just like every other time. No one even knew where to start. That was a clear cry for action, but nobody ever seems to know where to start.

At the end of fourth period I went to the cafeteria. A lot of black kids were in the halls, but not many white kids. Many more than usual skipped; only about one fourth of the white kids were in school. As I was walking into the cafeteria with Mike, I said, "I can feel the tension." He said, "I know you can -- but I just think it's a big joke." I said, "But you can feel it, you know it's there, don't you?" He said, "Oh, yeah, it's there all right. It's real."

I was eating next to some white kids and one of them had had some kind of an incident. He was evidently on his way into the auditorium and he referred to some "fucking nigger who had been holding the door and who wouldn't let him in." There were four or five of the white kids, long haired kids, two girls, three boys. I asked them at one point about Human Relations Day. He said, "Ah, man, it's just a fuckup." I said, "Did you attend?" He said, "No, no man, it's just a fuckup. There's no way to put it. It's just a bad scene, that's all."

Fifth period we went to the library for another discussion. Again, there were some 200 or 300 kids in there, only six or seven of them white. There was a speaker from some employment agency who talked about the right job training, a woman who talked a little about education, and then there was a black organizer from the NAACP who was absolutely dynamic. He explained historical racism from slavery on, and gave a good understanding of just what it is the blacks have to do, how they have to get together, and why they're oppressed. He told the few white students that they don't understand that the black students see them as oppressors, and he told the black students that they didn't understand that the whites didn't see themselves as oppressors. There was a girl at that point who got up and said something about Jews being a minority, too, and how come the blacks are always talking about getting together with the blacks and excluding Jews. But the man pointed out that the blacks act as a buffer zone between the white middle class and the Jews. The blacks, in effect, take the beating for the Jews and the Chicanos. What the Chicanos and Jews should do is go out of their way to support the blacks. He was a professional speaker, and had all the students right with him. He even succeeded in quieting Barbara's separatism. She said that she preferred George Wallace, and he said that he compared George Wallace to Adolf Hitler. "Jews knew where Hitler was and look

at what he did to them. I'd rather play around with white liberals because they think they're being slick, but I can be slick too." In response to white questions about why blacks had to use violence, he referred to the violence that was used against blacks and he consistently related the present black issue to the slavery issue.

He made another interesting statement, too. He said, "You can't be black in American society without being paranoid. You just can't do it." The bell rang but the students wouldn't let him go. Some left but many remained, "Stay here, stay here," as soon as the bell rang. And so we all went to the cafeteria and continued the discussion. The whites who came were, I think, still trying to engage in a reasonable dialogue. They think that if they make an effort, the blacks will see that they are sincere and well intentioned.

At one point, one of these white girls, convinced that what the speaker said was true, said" "But what can we do to get together?" Barb told her quietly, "Nothing ... There's nothing you can do. Don't even try!" and the speaker agreed.

That was the one time that I saw blacks together in school and what brought them together was not only the issue, but the adult and professionally skilled organizer.

TOGETHERNESS AMONG THE WHITES

There is one further issue that should be discussed, that of white student perspective. A criticism that a reader might have of this study is that while I have devoted the last forty pages to explaining what blacks do and attempt to do together, I will not pay equal amount of attention to the white student perspective.

There are two reasons for this: my recent book, Inside High School: The Students' World, is an account of a study designed to determine the perspectives white adolescents used to deal with their high school. I used a similar methodology; that is, I selected a fairly representative high school which was 97% white and attended it for six months. In general, I found that the students were rigidly subdivided into a series of varied interest groups and these groups were the important social referrent, not the school, class, or some common attitude toward the role of student. Any unity, togetherness and common participation displayed by students was limited to informal, small group activities. I attributed that to the fact that there were simply no activities which engaged the actions of more than a few students, and, therefore, there was no need for a common "student perspective." All seemed to find an individual way to accommodate the role of the student. Having done that, and finding that the white students at Central were adjusting the same way the previous subjects adjusted, I really did not feel it was necessary to duplicate that study by following the small-group life of white students at Central.

We found no common white perspective, not even any common understanding of blacks. The only indications of any togetherness we found among the whites were that they developed a decided pattern of avoiding blacks, just as blacks avoided whites. Even that seemed to be more a result of black pressure on blacks than anything else. There were a few whites, such as Leslie and Mark and those who came to the Human Relations discussion, who would have liked more interaction with blacks but blacks prevented it by putting pressure on those that would integrate. And, too, Mr. R's remark about the black celebrities rang true. These whites who would have preferred more interation

wanted to associate with the more popular blacks, such as George, Vic, Henry and Ray, who were football players, or Barbara, the student council president, or Pam & Marie, the cheerleaders. The less visible students, both black and white, were ignored by those of the other race.

But since even those few whites who would have liked some integration were unable to achieve it, we may say of the whites what we said of the blacks: they were not together among themselves, and the only patterns of behavior common to them was in their general avoidance, either from dislike, fear, disinterest, or pressure of blacks.

And, too many whites intensely disliked blacks. Many referred to blacks as "niggers," "spades," and "coons," and they exerted pressure on their own peers to avoid them. For a white to associate with blacks, except for a specific activity, would have automatically excluded him from his white group. Mark was often asked why he took "the nigger courses." Therefore, why should any white make an attempt to be included among blacks? He would lose his white friends and perhaps not be able to gain any black ones.

Whites simply had to respect the race lines. One day I was talking to Pam, a very pretty and popular black girl, and a number of black boys passed us. Later I was asked very pointedly by them if I was "seeing that young lady." I thought it was funny, but if I were a 17 year old student, I don't think I would have talked to Pam again.

There was little reason to expect any togetherness among whites. They were severely divided by geographical, social and economic lines, and there were many incidents and reports that supported this non-togetherness.

Leslie's comment on "white trash" was a good example. As Mark told us

"for whites, Central is all cliques, some hide when they come, hang around with kids from their own neighborhoods. But after they've been here awhile, they meet each other. But they still stay in their clique." He went on... "There are more cliques in Central than anywhere. Kids just don't communicate." "It's the only way to survive in a school of 2,000."

There were a number of whites who like Mark, held class office and they would frequently deny the lack of togetherness.

Mark was a Council officer, so I asked if the Council was able to get any kids together. "No, we can't. We don't do anything." A. does everything in this school. Sometimes we come up with a proposal, but anytime we come up with anything that limits his function as principal, he would shake it down." I asked if, as a council officer, he had broad contacts: "There are leaders ... but there's no communication between the leaders and the rest of the school."

"Is the Council integrated?" I asked. "About half and half ... We're together on the meetings, but when we leave the meetings, whites leave with whites and blacks with blacks."

However, Mark was one who said that all the kids opposed the administration and mentioned the "hand holding protest" as an example. Since that was the only reported case and since only 20% of the students participated, I wouldn't put too much faith in it as a sign of "togetherness."

Teachers and administrators agreed with the idea of a fragmented student body: A guidance counselor who had been at Central for many years said that there was: "No school spirit, not like before (1955-1960). We had a couple kids then who would miss the Northern rally, but not many, just a couple. Everybody else was there, not like now. Now kids just come and go home, like a job."

I did notice something when I talked to Mark. He's vice president of the Council and a former class officer; we were at a particularly busy corner of the hall during two passing periods. But all the time, only two of the hundreds of students that passed greeted him.

Kathy, a white girl, had been a class officer for three years. She agreed that there was no togetherness among whites. She explained it as a reflection of the social class and economic differences, like the rich kids, "they're almost all freaks, they can afford the style and the drugs."

Then, on the matter of her election to office and how she got it: "I was unopposed, and last year I was unopposed, too. My sister is a sophomore class officer and she ran unopposed."

"What does that mean to be a class officer."

"It doesn't mean anything. We don't do a thing, we can't. Like we wanted to have red robes for graduation, but we were told that they don't go well with the hall and had to have black. Then our president, Oscar, he doesn't do anything. I mean, he has all these ideas and then he never shows up."

She added that the class adviser had, in the beginning of the year, been making all the decisions, so Oscar saw that he wouldn't be able to do anything.

"Who gets in on senior activities?"

"The kids on the senior council."

"Black?"

"Well, they're on it, but they don't come."

She also blamed the administration, as did Mark. "They don't let us do anything. It's the kids against the administration."

I then explored the idea that it's the same kids over and over, and Kathy said. "Yes, except for Oscar, he's a minority person, and he was running against

a kid who had been class president before," and that 'the kids who got elected were usually the same kids who had been elected before."

I asked Kathy if there had been any violence and was that ever a source of white togetherness. "No, it isn't a case of animosity, there isn't any of that. The blacks don't care either. The kids here are just apathetic, they don't care about anything. You can't get them excited." Referring to the time she spent in school, Kathy said she didn't do anything: "They babysit us."

I went to some class meetings and could easily understand what Cathy meant. At a typical junior class council meeting, only Leslie, the vice president, and Doug, the president, did anything. She made the announcements, told the thirty others who were waiting around in desultory fashion what she and Doug had planned and all, but ignored George, the black president, who sat, smiled and didn't seem to mind at all.

Of course, one can't expect many students to become involved in activities because the activities are so limited. The junior class had some five hundred plus members and their activities from September to March consisted of one dance, one car wash, and one candy selling project.

Activities were the same way. This or that club or class would sometimes be seen selling something, T-shirts, etc., in the cafeteria, but there was no class activity that demanded the involvement of large numbers. A yearbook, yes, with a staff of nine or ten; a newspaper with a similar group; this or that singing group or sports group, but nowhere were there any activities or interests common to whites and blacks or even common to the majority of whites.

Larry was in charge of the fund raising for the senior class. I asked what he did: "Well, we raise money for the senior dance and the senior week-end. Mr. A. said that as long as even ten kids went to the senior prom, we'll have one. We polled the class and only 200 kids said they wanted to have a dance. They didn't say they'd go, just that they wanted to have the prom held." I asked him how they raised money for the prom. "Well, we have dances, but nobody comes .. just the blacks." (Then hurredly), "and not many of them." Another girl was across the table and told me how "kids can't do anything here, can't even smoke in the school, we don't even have a smoking area. If they catch you smoking in your car, they throw you out."

Doug, the president of the junior class, agreed, first of all, in the racial split, but added: "We've heard so much about it that we're tired about it. Nobody even talks about it anymore." He also agreed to the split among whites. In reference to other whites, Doug said that he had never been down in the auto shop, but that he had walked by there on his way home a number of times and seen fights. "That's a whole different class of kids down there. I don't even want to go down there."

In reference to one case of interracial interaction, he talked about George. He said "Sometimes it's clumsy. The other night they were out in the car -- the three of them -- with George and a car pulled in front of us. A black guy was driving, and Scott started to say, 'You stupid...' and what he would have said was 'You stupid nigger.' But he held his tongue and stopped at 'You stupid...'"

Glen, who was black, didn't say anything to that, but he agreed that that was the way it was. When Black and whites were together it "was clumsy."

I asked if all kids hung around in groups. Glen agreed that blacks did.

Doug gave the example, "I have this friend, Scott. We're together most of the day. We have classes in the same vicinity, so we walk to class. Then we're in the cafeteria, after school and on weekends." I asked if he hung around with the same kids most of the time and he said, "Yeah, pretty much... Blacks do the same thing."

"Do a few kids run everything?" I asked. "Well, yeah, pretty much. We've got a new thing this year, the junior council. And any kid who wants to, can join it." I asked how many had. He said about 65. I said, "Of those 65, how many do anything?" He said about fifty. "A lot of kids really do get involved." "What do you get involved in?" "The dances and the parties and the car washes...." Then he went on to tell how everyone was saving their money for the senior prom. I found that in my previous study, many of the involved students exaggerated the extent of general student involvement. I think Doug's perceptions of "A lot of kids" getting involved, was exaggerated. It just wasn't there.

I asked if there had been any interaction in junior high. Glen spoke up and said there wasn't any there either. "But in junior high it's rougher." "When a white guy got mad at a black, or a black at a white, everybody fights. Kids come from all over the place. That doesn't happen anymore." Doug agreed. He said, "You don't find as much showing off among kids up here. It just doesn't go. Kids don't get all excited and try to get everyone else in a fight now."

In sum, what the whites had in common was that they had nothing in common, some liked this or that black student, like Doug who brought his black friend, Glen along when we talked. Others, despised blacks and many, like Kathy and Leslie, would have liked more interaction with blacks and resented those militant blacks who prevented it.

On the matter of class activities, which might have served to unify the whites at least, and possibly the blacks, there were none that we found which included a cross section of white students. In fact, there was nothing in the school that could be called a set of common beliefs and activities among whites, other than that each individual one of them, if he wanted to stay in school, had to adjust to the role of the student, and for one reason or another, avoided blacks.

Therefore, we conclude that the only element common to the whites other than the role of students was that they were white and therefore different from the blacks. But with the blacks fragmented as they were and unable to foment any concerted action, then there was no reason for this group of vastly diverse whites to unite and they never did.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR

In Chapter 3 I demonstrated the extent of the interaction and non-interaction of blacks and whites in Central High School. In this fourth chapter I have attempted to get into the question of whether there is a black student perspective as opposed to a white student perspective.

There are some definite things to be said about the issue of blacks seeing themselves as a group distinct from whites. There are, first of all, some basic behaviors carried on by blacks that were not carried on by whites. Their way of talking, their way of panning each other and their way of dancing: these may sound like small things, but to adolescents they can be very important, and they did contribute to the racial barrier.

More important to us, however, was the blacks' way of regarding themselves as separate and their attempts to maintain that separateness. In general, we can conclude that while they did have a perspective, it did not seem to go

beyond the sense of togetherness. That is, a perspective is composed of two parts, belief and behavior, but while the blacks apparently believed themselves to be unique, they were unable to carry out any specific behaviors in unison. They, too, were severely fragmented into groups. They couldn't get together on anything such as how to form a union, why to form a union, or what to do to honor black awareness day, or even why they should have such a day. It was obviously terribly frustrating for them. A number of times we saw blacks actually cry at the way they treated one another.

The issue of white togetherness was not treated extensively, but as stated, we did not think it was necessary to investigate a question which we felt was already answered. Our conclusion, based on my previous study as well as the limited information we gathered in Central, is that there is no common student perspective; the whites are subdivided by class, neighborhood, age, interests and group affiliation. Probably the one element that extended across all whites in the school was their avoidance of blacks and in some cases, that was not something they actually wanted, but was something that the blacks imposed on them.

For anyone who did want to work for togetherness, there were some decided barriers and one of them was drugs. Speaking about pushers, Kathy said there were kids who operated in the halls and that she "could point them out because they are always carrying, but I don't, I don't want to hurt anyone, I don't want to get hurt either. Like, I hang around with some freaky kids, and if I get jumped they won't stick up for me. They don't want to get involved -- they'll just stand there." She also said, "And then ... like adults don't see things, but I can spot those kids who are dealing." I asked how. "Well, you just know, all the kids know. Anyway, if you're in,

you can spot them."

That unwillingness to become involved was common to Central students, both black and white.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

Summary

At this point some attempt must be made to sum up and make sense of the data. This can best be done by addressing this chapter to the final exploratory question;

HOW DOES BI-RACIALNESS AND THE INTERACTION OR NON-INTERACTION OF BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS EFFECT VARIOUS FACETS OF THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION?

There is no way to posit a direct answer to this question. The concept of "organization" is inferential. One does not look directly at the "organization" City High. He begins by looking at the goals, programs, and formal processes, but he must flesh out that skeletal structure by observing and recording the minutae of daily life among the participants. He should look at and record Mrs. H. in her tears, Mr. K. in his classroom, watch Frank and Herbie argue, Frank fight; he must talk to Reprussia and Mike, Leslie and Mark, and a number of other students and teachers, then to the administrators; watch the action in the classes and cafeteria, hear bits and pieces of information and opinion, and only then, when all of these phenomena are recorded, can he distill out the essential elements and abstract an entity which may legitimately be referred to as "the organization." This is not to deny the objective and real existence of an organization. It certainly exists, and it is real, but it is not at a level of reality that can be directly observed and described. Rather, it can be approached only through a distillation and synthesis of the more tangible bits of activity and information that were described and recorded over an extended period of

time. It might be likened to a "second level reality," or a second level abstraction, whereas the school program and the bits and pieces of action and information are at the first level of reality. The crucial elements in the previous two chapters were the descriptions. The thrusts of this chapter are the processes of distilling and synthesizing the elements described.

To repeat: "How does bi-racialness effect the school organization?" It is my contention that bi-racialness has a decided effect on the organization because it is the strongest and most visible of the divisive factors operating in that school. It is certainly not the only divisive factor, but it is inextricably related to the others, and it is the one that seems to exert the most influence and cause the most conflict.

Let me explain. Any organization has a number of basic elements: a formal structure with roles, patterns of communication and activity; an authority structure; a technology or some means of applying its resources to its raw material; and some agreed upon goals -- that is, a general awareness on the part of the participants of what the organization is all about, as well as a sense of knowing when it has or has not accomplished its task. In addition, there is a factor which may or may not be present to a high degree, but the degree of presence or absence of which has a very strong effect on that organization. That is the factor of "consensual basis" of a sense of "mutual cooperation" among the members. While a high degree of this element is desirable, it is not always necessary. One may think of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) as an organization which has a very high degree of "consensual basis." The Individuals have that strong, internalized sense of "Jesuitness" about them which enables them to work

together for a common goal, knowing that individual success is synonomous with organizational success. A similar example might be a group of research scientists working on a specific project. If the project is successful each individual is successful, and therefore, one can expect to find a high degree of cooperativeness among the members. Of course, relationships among Jesuits and among research scientists are not always ideal. There will be conflicts among them which may become quite severe, but if the participants have that internalized "consensual basis," they have a prior agreement that they will not allow the conflicts between them to destroy the organization. Or, if the conflict does threaten the organization then the particular Jesuit or research scientist must choose to either stop his dissenting or leave.

That is what is meant by a strong consensual basis. While some organizations need a high degree, and others may need a lower degree, it is safe to say that without some of this there is no organization.

But there are two types of consensual basis. The first type has two elements: (1) belief in the basic worthwhileness of the organization, and, (2) a willingness to cooperate with others in that organization for the achievement of mutually agreed-upon goals. The second type has only the first element: (1) belief in the basic worthwhileness of the organization. That is, the members comply with the organization's basic demands, but they do not, nor do they even need to, cooperate to attain the shared goals.

The Jesuits and research scientists have the first type, but City High has the second. The individual students believe in the school's worthwhileness -- after all, City is not a prison and if they did not like it, they could leave -- but they do not communicate or cooperate with one another

in order to achieve either individual or organizational success. Of course, schools do not really need a very high degree of consensual basis because education is an individual product. But still, this low degree of consensual basis, organizationally speaking, is not desirable for City Central because without it there is so little basis for the peaceful resolution of conflict among students.

And the potential for conflicts among students was painfully obvious. They came from a wide range of cultural, social and economic classes, and even geographical backgrounds. And, as the data in Chapters 3 and 4 indicate, not only were the blacks and whites separated by language, customs and color, but neither the blacks nor the whites were together among themselves. We heard potential conflicts articulated everyday: L. referred to the "rich kikes on Court Street;" Leslie and Doug, who might be called "rich kikes," referred to the boys in the Auto Shop as "white trash;" the boys in the Auto Shop talk of the "niggers and spades," while they, along with other whites, are referred to as "fuckin' honkies" by militant blacks, who also reserve a special hatred for the "colored," the "toms," and the "white girl lovers;" moderate blacks refer to militants as "back bitin' motherfuckers," and all the students scorned the "freaks." Cathy blamed the administration for keeping kids suppressed, yet admitted that if she exposed the pushers, she would get hurt because her friends "didn't want to get involved." The students in City Central had so little in common with one another, that none of them seemed to want to get involved, nor did there seem to be anything with which they could get involved. There was really no reason for them to have any consensual basis, communal spirit or mutual cooperativeness. The various individuals and factions didn't even like each other, and while they did not openly riot and while fights seldom occurred, the reason was that

the formal organization was structured to "keep the lid" on.

This, then, is the main point about bi-racialness and the organization of City High. Bi-racialness contributed strongly to the creation of conflicts among the students and simultaneously prevented the students from creating an adequate "consensual basis" which might have been used to resolve those conflicts. Therefore, the organization was structured in such a way as to prevent those conflicts from disrupting the normal activities and had to adopt a number of decidedly restrictive characteristics; the school administrators spent their time in the halls to "make their presence felt," as the principal put it; the students were allowed no power; the periods were 57 minutes long with only a few minutes for passing; there were no free periods, no study halls; the cafeteria service was brief one year, eliminated the next, and the administrators admitted they eliminated it for security reasons; school functions such as dances and parties were rare; funds had to be alocated for four security guards; and, as the principal put it, "If there's any question, I find it best to say 'No.'" It seemed that the total organization was geared to prevent potential conflict among students from developing into open hostility. This effect even carried into the classrooms where the teachers had to make some accommodation with conflict among students. In fact, I believe that the technique of non-teaching used by some teachers was a way of keeping potential conflict in balance. The teachers, by walking around and interacting with various individuals and small groups, kept the students -- many of whom were bored-- from joining together or interacting in any way which might have produced conflict either among the factions or between the teacher and the united students.

We are not saying that conflict is bad in organizations. It is not.

In fact, it is always to be expected in a limited reward structure, and has a number of very useful functions:

> A certain amount of discord, inner divergence and counter controversy is organically tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together. Individuals and groups within an organization never have identical interests. The differences in interest always produce some sort of conflict.[1]

But the conflict at City Central, or the potential conflict at City Central was apparently far greater than the organizations' ability to handle it.

There is an additional consideration. That is, organizational energy is a limited entity, and while it can be increased and decreased, it cannot be increased indefinitely. Therefore, the energy that went into the maintaining of peace was not available for improving instructional processes. If the administrators were busy with discipline, they were not busy with instruction. If teachers spent their time worrying about disruption, they spent less time on preparation. The net effect of the biracialness was a more limited instructional program than might otherwise be found.

To briefly review the process, in his discussion of the positive function of conflict in organizations, Cosar says:

> A social structure in which there can exist a multiplicity of conflicts contains a mechanism for bringing together otherwise isolated, apathetic, or mutually hostile parties and for taking them into the field of public activities. Moreover, such a structure fosters a multiplicity of associations and coalitions whose diverse purposes crisscross each other, we recall, thereby preventing alliances along one major line of cleavage.[2]

For most organizations that seems to make sense, but that is not a

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1 Bertram M. Gross, Organizations & Their Managing, New York: (The Free Press, 1968), p. 17.

2 Cosar, Lewis, The Function of Social Conflict (The Free Press) New York: 1956, p. 155.

description of City Central. While there is "a multiplicity of conflicts," there is no "mechanism for bringing together otherwise isolated, apathetic, or mutually hostile parties," and therefore, the social structure or organization had no effective way to deal with the conflicts inside its walls.

Now, I said that bi-racialness was only one of the divisive factors, but it seems to me that it is the most powerful of those factors. It is the factor which divides the blacks -- that is, they could not agree on how to treat whites, and hence could not develop internal unity. It is the factor responsible for language barriers. It is closely related to the geographical barriers -- blacks didn't live in white enclaves, nor did many whites live with blacks. It divides students in extra-curricular sports activities, and it definitely accentuates the already powerful class conflicts. I sat one day and watched three girls, two white and one black, in the same row of a French class. The two whites were talking about "going to Israel for the summer." The black girl watched, listened and said nothing, and I happened to reflect that the two whites probably had more in common with the Israelies than they had with their black classmate.

And, too, the historical animosity between whites and blacks cannot be ignored. Many whites felt that "the niggers should go back to Africa," and the blacks blamed whites for 350 years of servitude. And those students who did not feel any animosity towards members of the other race were prevented from integrating by those who did.

Cosar points out:

> What threatens equilibrium ... is not conflict as such, but the rigidity itself which permits hostilities to accumulate and to be channeled along one major line of cleavage once they break out in conflict.[3]

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3 Ibid., page 157.

The conflicts among blacks and whites were regarded as particularly dangerous because they were, "channeled along one major line of cleavage," the line of race. In response to the fear of open racial hostility, the administrators adopted a rigid stand to literally "channel" that conflict out of school since they felt they had no effective way to ameliorate it.

In sum, there is a situation wherein -- we repeat -- there is a high potential for conflict and an insufficient, internal organization or "consensual basis" among the members to assist in its resolution.

Behaviorally this meant that the administrators in City Central and the hall attendants spent their energy arbitaring petty conflicts to prevent them from breaking out and disrupting the school. However, the alternative would have been to devote a great deal of organizational energy to creating a "multiplicity"of associations and coalitions" among the students which would have, hopefully, forced the blacks and whites to criss-cross and thus break up their one "major line of cleavage." But this would have entailed a higher risk, and probably would have been regarded as detrimental to the school's function as a transmitter of information. After all, City Central was not structured to increase "togetherness" among students, black and/or white. It was set up so that the teacher-expert can pass on his particular speciality to batches of students each day, and so those individual students could accumulate enough of each particular speciality to consider themselves "high school educated" and presumably capable of dealing with the larger society. For the professional teachers and administrators this is what counts, not "creating a multiplicity of associations and coalitions," which would hopefully head to better race relations and understanding among students.

There is an additional point. Again, according to Cosar,

> ... conflict tends to be dysfunctional for a social structure in which there is no or insufficient toleration and institutionalization of conflict. The intensity of conflict which threatens to "tear apart," which attacks the consensual basis of a social structure, is related to the rigidity of the structure.[4]

In this regard Cosar is no doubt correct in his statement of the relationship between the "intensity of conflict" and the "rigidity of the structure." That is City Central did have a highly rigid structure as a direct result of its high potential for conflict. I would only add that the initial focus of both the intensity of conflict and the high "rigidity" was not with the administrators, but was among various groups of students, and even beyond that, lay outside the school in the attendance area. In fact, we use the term "attendance area" to refer to that seventeen square mile section of the City, because there was nothing that would encourage us to think of it as a "community."

Whether the organization even had the ability to begin conflict resolution is questionable because there was such a high degree of what Cosar refers to as "nonrealistic conflicts" which, as he explains, "are not occasioned by rival ends of the antagonists, but by the conflict as an end in itself, insofar as it affords only tension release, the chosen antagonist can be substituted for any other suitable target."[5] Frank led the group to the third floor not to settle a dispute, but to express his outrage at white society's treatment of blacks. The boy with the cello did him no harm, he was just there. Trevino's fight, the

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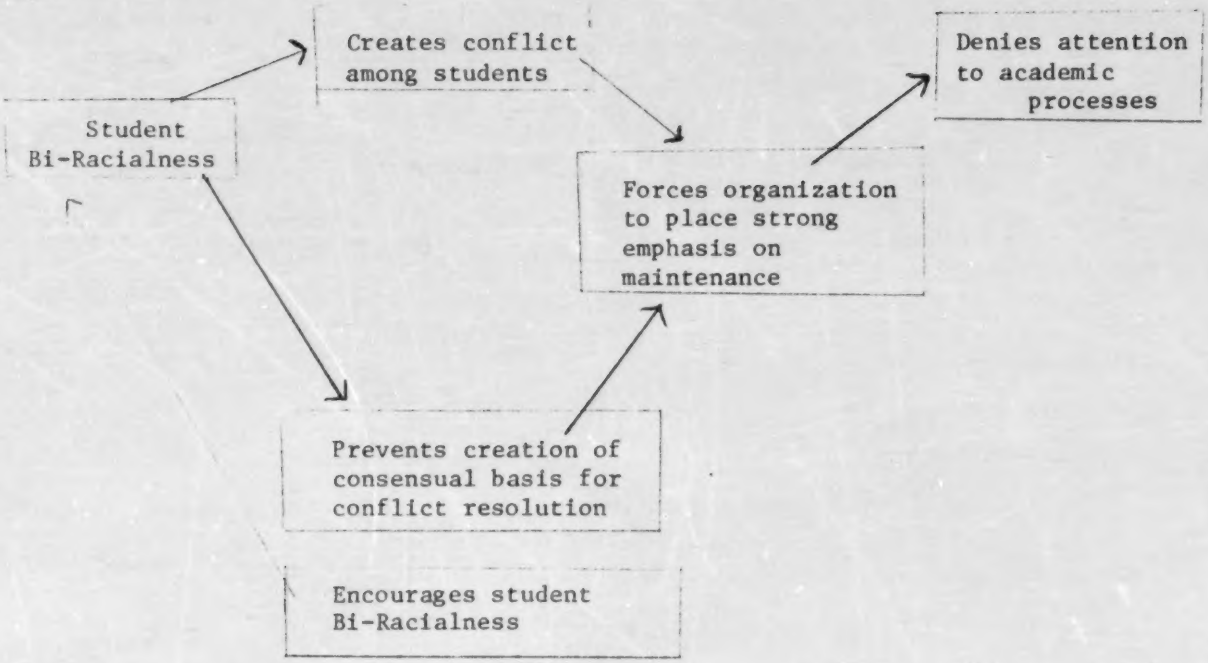
4 Ibid., page 157.

5 Ibid., page 156.

japping at the fire drill, the attack on Ray: these, as far as the organization goes, are "nonrealistic," that is, they are organizationally unresolvable. Perhaps it was most evident on Human Relations Day when the well-intentioned white girl asked, "But what can we do?" and Barbara told her ... "nothing ... there's just nothing ... don't even try."

There is a looping effect in the explanation: the heavy emphasis on maintenance, or on keeping the students moving and getting them out before they had time to get into trouble also reinforced bi-racialness. The students seldom had time to do other than go to class and take care of themselves; therefore, they did little to alleviate the potential conflict and, in fact, reinforced the bi-racialness that kept them apart.


Creates conflict among students
Denies attention to academic processes
Student Bi-Racialness
Forces organization to place strong emphasis on maintenance
Prevents creation of consensual basis for conflict resolution
Encourages student Bi-Racialness

A chart illustrating the explanation of the relationship between Bi-racialness and the school organization.

IMPLICATIONS

I would prefer to be as careful as possible with the implications of this study, because whatever one says about City High and biracialness, must immediately be connected to the larger community and probably the general state of American society. Personally, I consider myself a school teacher, not a general social critic.

Let us briefly consider the question: "Is City High a good model for other urban, biracial, high schools to follow?" There are at least two sides to this question, and for the purpose of concluding this study, let me briefly examine the aspects of the "Yes" and "No" answers. If one says, "Yes" to the question, he is probably thinking of the school's traditional function as a transmitter of information, and no-doubt believes that if a particular teacher is to pass on his speciality of English, Math, History, or any other subject matter, he can best do so in a stable and orderly situation. And the fact is that if one were a good teacher and had a reasonably motivated class, he was free to do what he wished at Central. Of course, he couldn't go out of the classroom except, perhaps, to the library, but in that room no one bothered him, the students came and left on time, and if he had any discipline problems, he could get quick and effective assistance from the administrators. I think that for many teachers, City High was an ideal place to teach.

He is probably also reflecting on the fairness with which the system was administered. Frank might complain:

> You can't do anything for black people in this organization. If you do go up to the principal and say, 'I want to shoot John Doe because he's white,' do you think he's going to let me? No! The principals not going to let anybody do anything

when its just for black people in this school.

Someone pointed out that "students can bring outsiders to dances now," but Frank replied, "Well, you got that because the whites wanted it too, not just because the blacks wanted it."

But that is as far as the militants ever went in condemning the administrators of the school, and that is not an indictment of unfairness or bigotry. It was the same thing Frank always said, and it was a reflection of Frank's general outrage at white society, not a condemnation of a particular teacher or administrator. Some of the vociferous black students had been able to pinpoint an administrator or an administrative act which they considered particularly racist, then they might have been able to organize. But they did not see the school as oppressive, or let us say, as "unusually" repressive, that is moreso than white society. And, indeed, why should they? They were treated with respect by teachers; they dominated some of the most important sports; the one time they had a clear grievance about the absence of black cheerleaders, their request of equal representation was immediately granted. And, as far as the black predicament in general, they didn't lay any particular blame for that crime on the administrators. If blacks were thrown out with greater frequency than whites, or were treated less fairly, or were purposely sent to lower class, they would have had a grievance, but those things didn't occur. Of course, neither was the school designed exclusively for blacks. Many felt it was not their school. "We can't do anything for City High; we just go here, that's all." And they were right, but neither did it belong to the whites and therefore, Derrick could say; "As long as I walk from Room 212 to 222 and keep my hands down and don't bother anybody, they can't

hurt me." He was right. "They can't" and they didn't try. Nor did the administrators ever do anything to favor the blacks and were therefore, free of the whites accusation, "the blacks getting everything." One could simply say that the school was geared to the individual's role as "student," not to his color.

There is a third strong point in favor of a "Yes" answer to the question. The principal knew he was considered rigid ... "Do they call you repressive too?" "Yes, that too," and he admitted that he had been brought in to "calm down" a bad situation and had been reasonably successful even though he admitted that "there were some bad times ... around 1967-68 .. we had school closings when the blacks would march down the halls and clear the whites out of their way. I almost walked out myself twice that year." But he didn't walk out because, as he put it, he kept working to achieve his criterion of success: "to keep City High a safe place for students." As he said it, "If I can't assure you that your child is safe, I'll leave it to someone else." And, except for a few isolated incidents, a student was indeed safe in City High, as safe as one could expect to be in a large, urban, biracial high school. Safe to attend class, safe to choose his courses from among some very excellent teachers as well as the others, safe to walk around the halls, safe to go to the lavatories, and safe to graduate. And, the value of that cannot be denied. Administrators who cannot keep peace among high school students get fired, and for a very good reason. Violence in schools is regarded by parents, teachers and administrators, and certainly a great majority of students, as absolutely intolerable. And both black and white students at City said, regarding one another, "If you don't bother them, they won't bother you."

Therefore, a "Yes" answer to the question: "Is City Central a good model" has three supporting points: (1) Teachers were free to teach and students were free to learn: (2) although it was rigid, it was not unfair, and (3) racial violence, which only further engenders bitterness, was avoided.

This forces the question, "Could the school become a place where the same mechanisms for conflict resolution between blacks and whites might occur?" First of all, if the answer is "Yes," then we have to ask, "What is the solution?" Presumably it would involve a large number of small, face-toface student activities instituted for the purpose of bringing blacks and whites together for the sake of better understanding. There is one problem with this: it assumes that racism is a thing that can be reasoned away in the process of rational discourse. Now, if it isn't, then those small, face-to-face situations might wind up like the drama class, barely avoiding outright violence.

However, there is another answer to the question. That is, "No, City Central is not a good model for an urban school to follow because it is overly concerned with maintaining a facade of education and stability, while ignoring the real important issues of race relations." In fact, the job of the school is not merely the transmission of information, it is to teach social harmony and tolerance, and to do this successfully those who run the schools must be willing to take more risks than they are presently taking. The function of the school is not merely to minimize opportunities for social conflict, it must optimize or maximize opportunities for learning, and this cannot be done if one insists on simply glossing over or ignoring social problems.

Those who say, "No" might also point out that the healthy organization usually seeks to increase its function, elaborate on its structure, and make better use of its material. But the Central administrators, rather than increasing the school's function, actually sought to diminish it. When they eliminate cafeteria service, they pass up a chance to teach; when they close the school after five periods, they diminish their ability to instruct; when they throw kids out and suspend them, they are turning aside from their task as a maintainer of society, and, in effect, denying students active involvement in a social organization, denying them a chance to learn socially useful skills, and, in effect, electing to move the school toward closedness and increased isolation of its individual components. In fact, City High, is an essentially unhealthy organization because rather than dealing directly with its energy input, it chooses to either ignore it or channel it out of the building.

One could also point to the teachers who do not teach, imply in that situation, neither do students learn and conclude that the organization's attention to Central prevented anyone in that organization from dealing with real basic deficiencies in the productive sector.

Therefore, those for whom the answer is "No" have at least three points: (1) The school is ignoring it's real function; (2) It is rapidly becoming a defunct organization rather than seeking to increase its function, and (3) It cannot even deal with it's own poor teachers.

So, what is the answer. I do not know but it seems to me that the terrible legacies of slavery and racism which are with us even today will take more time to erracicate than any of us have who are now living. The fact is that in City Central, one finds blacks and whites who, even while

distrusting and disliking one another, are carrying out their tasks in the company of one another and at least learning that even while avoiding direct interaction, can tolerate each others' presence for extended time periods. In fact, we are the first Americans who even attempted to place large numbers of whites and blacks in the same place, give them the same tasks and attempted to treat them with an unprecedented equalness. City High -- as it is -- perhaps represents one of the first halting steps toward true racial integration.

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